SIR
THOMAS
MORE
LORD
CHANCELLOR

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/fameofthomasbles0000vari

PORTSMOUTH PRIORY
PORTSMOUTH
RHODE ISLAND

PORTSMOUTH PRIORY
PORTSMOUTH
RHODE ISLAND

THE FAME OF BLESSED THOMAS MORE

THE FAME OF BLESSED THOMAS MORE

BEING ADDRESSES
DELIVERED IN HIS HONOUR
IN CHELSEA, JULY 1929

BY

FATHER RONALD KNOX
HILAIRE BELLOC
G. K. CHESTERTON
LORD JUSTICE RUSSELL
HENRY BROWNE, S.J.
REGINALD BLUNT
BEDE JARRETT, O.P.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY
BY
PROFESSOR R. W. CHAMBERS

#000
Property of
CLgA
Please return to
Graduate Theological
Union Library
ALMA COLLEGE
270.05
LIBRARY
M813-5
Alma California

LONDON
SHEED AND WARD
31 PATERNOSTER ROW

18516

First Published - October, 1929

The Coat of Arms of Sir Thomas More, by Major Shepard F.S.A., is reproduced by courtesy of the Artist and the Universe.

S. R. E.

EMO . CARDINALI

CVIVS . IN . DIOECESI

NOBIS

SANCTAM . SERVARVNT . FIDEM

BB . PROTOMARTVRES

A . S . MDXXXV

The papers collected in this volume, with the exception of the Introductory Essay, consist of addresses given at the More Memorial Exhibition at Chelsea, in July 1929. *The speakers have kindly permitted them to be republished for the material object for which the Exhibition was organized, namely, the Building Fund for a necessary new frontage of the Beaufort Street Convent, where the Sisters in charge of the Shrine, maintain ceaseless adoration by day and by night in reparation for the national crime of the Blessed Martyr's execution.*

The Catalogue of the Exhibition is appended in deference to the wish of many who desired a record of the collection in permanent form. The promoters cannot miss this opportunity of expressing their deep gratitude and that of lovers of More to His Gracious Majesty; to the College of Arms; to Religious Communities; to many noble and other private persons, Catholic and non-Catholic, who granted loans of their priceless treasures of art, literature and antiquity, in order to make the Exhibition not entirely unworthy of its spiritual object.

CONTENTS

PAGE

Introductory Essay:

Sir Thomas More's fame among his countrymen . 11
Professor R. W. Chambers

The Charge of Religious Intolerance . . . 35
Father Ronald Knox

The Witness to Abstract Truth 53
Hilaire Belloc

A Turning Point in History 63
G. K. Chesterton

A Great Lord Chancellor 67
Lord Justice Russell

A Catholic of the Renaissance 83
Henry Browne, S.J.

The Glory of Chelsea 95
Reginald Blunt

A National Bulwark against Tyranny . . . 107
Bede Jarrett, O.P.

Appendix I *Catalogue of the More Memorial Exhibition*, July 1929 117

Appendix II *A Short Bibliography of books relating to the Martyr*, compiled by W. E. Campbell 131

SIR THOMAS MORE'S FAME AMONG HIS COUNTRYMEN

BY

PROFESSOR R. W. CHAMBERS

SIR THOMAS MORE'S FAME AMONG HIS COUNTRYMEN

On the scaffold, Sir Thomas More "called upon the people thereabout to pray for him, and to bear witness with him that he should there now suffer death in and for the faith of the Holy Catholic Church." There were many of us who came to gaze upon the relics and memorials of More collected at Chelsea, upon whom *he* would have gazed sadly, as upon wandering sheep outside the fold. Yet I had no fear, when I reached the door of 28 Beaufort Street, Chelsea, on 9th July, that I should be turned away. Whatever the views of those who came to the Memorial Exhibition, each at any rate carried a half-crown which (as Father Ronald Knox has hinted), whatever the errors of its former owner, will be put to a use which we all agree in applauding.

But I was *not* prepared for the very great courtesy of those responsible for this volume, in asking that I should contribute to it. I feel the difficulty of saying anything worthy of this occasion, or of introducing the essays contained in this book. But the invitation is tendered to me because I am one of a group of workers who have lately been toiling at manuscripts and early editions, in the hope of throwing new light upon the wonderful life of More and of his friends : I might mention Dr. P. S. Allen and Mrs. Allen, Dr. Reed, Dr. Elsie Hitchcock, and others : and I accept the invitation, on behalf of myself and my fellow-workers, with gratitude.

Indeed, the love of Sir Thomas More is one which joins together many and diverse spirits, as does the love

of the mountains, or of St. Francis of Assisi. Who but St. Francis could have united in devoted love of himself such different men as Benito Mussolini and Mr. Laurence Housman, Ernest Renan and the Capuchin who said of Renan, "Il a écrit sur Jésus autrement qu'on ne doit, mais il a bien parlé de Saint François. Saint François le sauvera !"

In the same way, men of every creed and nation gather in the evening in a lodging among the mountains, and feel that their common love of the high places makes them at one. And among them are those who next morning will be passing over glaciers and snowfields in the inmost recesses, or breathing the clean thin air of the peaks. And there are others of us who will never rise above the thicker atmosphere of the lower slopes; but we get refreshment and strength by looking up to the heights above us: *Levavi oculos meos in montes unde veniet auxilium mihi.*

Perhaps the strangest example of all these strange sympathies and contacts is the fact that the Director of the *Karl Marx-Engels Institute of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Republics* should be seeking for information about that great Communist, Sir Thomas More, from the Sisters of the Beaufort Street Convent, who maintain ceaseless adoration, with prayer that the crime of our people in slaying Sir Thomas More may be forgiven. The Sisters do not yet know of this enquiry from the *Marx-Engels Institute:* or that Dr. Hitchcock and myself have been appointed intermediaries to present the request. How all this came about, I will explain later on. I only quote it at this moment to show how love of Sir Thomas More unites those who might seem to many to be separated by a considerable gulf.

And this is not strange, since Sir Thomas More died for Unity.

Except during the last years of his life and at the time of his execution, Englishmen have not sinned *consciously* against the memory of More. Before his trial, indeed, preachers were instructed to denounce him as a traitor, and there is evidence that false stories were deliberately circulated in foreign countries about his cruelties to heretics. Such propaganda spread; it was repeated by Foxe and later historians, who wrote in good faith, though we cannot acquit them of negligence. But so noble was the character of More that even these libels could not seriously besmirch it, and those Englishmen are few indeed who have written about More without paying tribute to his nobility. That gloomy Dean of St. Patrick's, Jonathan Swift, held that More was "the person of the greatest virtue this kingdom ever produced" —indeed he seems to have thought that no one in modern days was worthy to associate with him. Readers of the *Travels* will remember how Captain Lemuel Gulliver was privileged to converse with the shades of famous men of old time, especially of Brutus, who told him "that his ancestor Junius, Socrates, Epaminondas, Cato the younger, Sir Thomas More and himself were perpetually together"—a sextumvirate, says Gulliver, to which all the ages of the world cannot add a seventh.

More has become a saint of whom the whole of England is proud. Strangely enough, this has not been altogether to the advantage of his reputation. We are all of us prone to make our heroes in our own image, and Liberal Protestant England has had such a genuine admiration of Sir Thomas More that a good deal has been read into the *Utopia* which is not really to be found there. A picture of More has thus been formed which had somehow to be harmonized with his martyrdom: and so arose the conception of Sir Thomas More which is still dominant in non-Catholic circles, and is, I think,

to be found in all historical text-books, whether written by avowed Protestants or by that numerous and influential class which has abandoned everything of Protestantism except its prejudices. So we have More depicted as a Renaissance scholar of that liberal type imagined by Mr. Seebohm: but we are to believe that later, as More's arteries hardened, so did his views. It is a common phenomenon : everyone who still remembers the discussions of his College Debating Society or University Union can name leaders of revolt at the age of twenty who have settled down into middle-aged defenders of society. It is with so many of us as it was with Mr. Pepys, when he met his old schoolfriend, Mr. Christmas, after the happy restoration of Charles II: "He did remember that I was a great Roundhead when I was a boy, and I was much afraid that he would have remembered the words that I said the day the King was beheaded (that, were I to preach upon him, my text should be—'The memory of the wicked shall rot')." So More is excused as an example of the common lapse: he "turned his back on the ennobling enthusiasms of his youth"; or he "deceived himself with the belief that he was saving society by putting his principles aside." If he changed, it was only as the rest of us change: and his sincerity is proved by his heroic death.

This, I think, is the dominant view to-day, in non-Catholic circles. And it is easy to see how it arose: it is easy to see how a man like Tyndale should be puzzled that More could share so much of what he himself felt, without sharing his impatience. Yet the current view is, I submit, an entirely false view; it is an error which will only be cured when we are able to make an accurate study of what More himself wrote, and what his biographers wrote about him in the two genera-

tions after his death. People hardly realize how handicapped we are by the fact that so much which is necessary to a fair understanding of More, has either not yet been printed, or has been printed in books almost as rare and inaccessible as the manuscripts themselves.

Very seldom indeed has a man lived a life so rigidly consistent as that of Sir Thomas More. Of course we can see him growing. Thus, as Father Bridgett has remarked, there is in his early letter to Colet "a little of the tone of a boy's theme" : he was a clever boy, by no means unaware of his cleverness. But the boy was father to the man. More has been criticized because in his later controversial tracts he shows a want of sympathy with the artizan—whether Lutheran or Lollard—who claims the right of private judgment in the most difficult theological matters. But, equally, the verses which More wrote as a youth, "A merry tale how a sergeant would learn to play the Friar," though no masterpiece, show, incidentally, that same contempt for the amateur theologian:

When a hatter
Will go smatter
    In philosophy,
Or a pedlar
Wax a meddler
    In theology,
All that ensue
Such craftës new
    They drive so far a cast
That ever more
They do therefore
    Beshrew themselves at last.

Always, from his boyhood, More feels himself to be under authority. Neither in the *Utopia*, nor elsewhere,

does he display any sympathy with rebellion against authority, either in matters civil or religious.

But now that Father Hallett has translated for English readers Stapleton's *Life of More*, hitherto available only in the rare and expensive editions printed abroad in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, now that the Early English Text Society is printing Harpsfield's *Life*, edited from eight manuscripts by Dr. Hitchcock, and that Eyre and Spottiswoode are republishing, under the editorship of Mr. Campbell, the great edition of More's English works, edited by his nephew William Rastell in 1557, the material will be at last available for a juster estimate of More.

During the past sixty years so much has been done by way of reprinting Tudor texts, that one wonders that the writings of More and his biographers have remained so long unedited. And the result of this neglect has been not only that More's character is often misunderstood, but also that his place in English literature is obscured. Whilst attention has been called to scores of minor writers, More has been pushed out of his right place in the history of English literature, a place which he occupied without dispute till almost our own day. For, until the era of modern reprints, the great 1557 edition of More's English works made his writings more accessible at any rate than those of many of his contemporaries. But, during the past sixty years, whilst the humblest of More's contemporaries have been reprinted, and often reprinted more than once, the great 1557 edition of More has remained the sole accessible authority for most of his works,and it has been growing steadily more and more costly and difficult to find. So that it has become more necessary now than it was a hundred years ago to explain what is the real significance of More and of his school in the history of English prose.

What was the estimate of More in the generation after his death, is shown by the dedication to Queen Mary, written by More's nephew, William Rastell, at the beginning of the great volume of 1557:

> When I considered with myself (most gracious sovereign) what great eloquence, excellent learning and moral virtues were and be contained in the works and books that the wise and godly man, Sir Thos. More, Kt., sometime Lord Chancellor of England (my dear uncle), wrote in the English tongue, so many and so well as no one Englishman (I suppose) ever wrote the like; whereby his works be worthy to be had and read of every Englishman that is studious or desirous to know and learn not only the eloquence and property of the English tongue, but also the true doctrine of Christ's Catholic Faith, the confutation of detestable heresies, or the godly moral virtues that appertain to the framing and forming of men's manners and consciences, to live a virtuous and devout Christian life; and when I further considered that those works of his were not yet all imprinted, and those that were imprinted were in several volumes and books: whereby it were likely that, as well those books of his that were already abroad in print, as those that were yet unprinted, should in time per-case perish and utterly vanish away (to the great loss and detriment of many) unless they were gathered together and printed in one whole volume:—for these causes (my most gracious liege lady) I did diligently collect and gather together as many of those his works, books, letters and other writings printed and unprinted, in the English tongue, as I could come by; and the same (certain years in the evil world past, keeping in my hands, very surely and safely) now lately have caused to be imprinted

> in this one volume, to the intent not only that every man that will, now in our days, may have and take commodity by them, but also that they may be preserved for the profit likewise of our posterity.

Nor is this merely a partizan estimate. Roger Ascham, who belonged to the other camp in religious matters, is almost as emphatic. He enumerates the necessary virtues in a historian and then adds:

> Sir Thomas More, in that pamphlet of Richard the Third, doth in most part, I believe, of all these points *so content all men*, as, if the rest of our story of England were so done, we might well compare with France, or Italy, or Germany in that behalf.

This estimate of More's position as a writer of English prose is re-echoed again and again by writers in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: More's *Richard III*, says one, is "the best, and the best written part of all our Chronicles, in *all men's* opinions"; "*all men*," says another, recognize its "incomparable excellencie." Ben Jonson and Samuel Johnson agree as to the importance of the place to be given to More—and this opinion continues into the first half of the nineteenth century; in fact More's position in English literature was never more clearly understood than it was then. "He is to be considered," says Sir James Macintosh, "as our earliest prose writer, and as the first Englishman who wrote the history of his country in its present language . . . . The composition of *Richard III* has an ease and rotundity which gratify the ear without awakening the suspicion of art." And Macintosh goes on, at considerable length, to mark the merits and limitations of "the father of English prose," as he calls More. The judgment of Henry Hallam is much the

same: he describes the style of *Richard III* as "the first example of good English language: pure and perspicuous, well chosen, without vulgarisms and pedantry."

Such was the verdict of the days before English literature became a subject of study in schools and colleges. Nowadays, people cannot see the wood for the trees, and text-books of English literature will be found crowded with the names of smaller men, to the detriment, and often to the entire exclusion, of Sir Thomas More. Professor Saintsbury has perhaps been no more unjust than the rest, but his great authority lends greater weight to his dicta than to those of lesser critics. "More's place," he tells us, "in the strict history of English literature is very small, and not extraordinarily high." Yet, whether it be high or not, a place which is filled by 1,458 pages of double column folio in black letter can hardly be small. But to that Professor Saintsbury has a prompt reply: "Black letter," he says, "*non legitur* with my eyes." And that is really the explanation of the difference in the judgments of the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. Saintsbury contrasts More, to his disadvantage, with Berners. I doubt whether the superiority of Berners as a writer would have occurred to anyone who had to read Berners and More on equal terms: Berners in the Pynson edition of 1523-5 and More in the Rastell-Tottell edition of 1557. (I speak with confidence, as I am one of the very few living men who have ploughed through Berners in Pynson's edition of 1523-5.) Samuel Johnson had to study his other Tudor texts under the same difficulties as he studied his More. But nowadays everybody else is accessible in texts easily handled; clearly printed in modern type; well indexed, so that a favourite passage can always be rediscovered. More alone suffers from a handicap shared nowadays by none of his contemporaries; and that is why he is misjudged.

But, in fact, there is no doubt that the position of More is as supreme as it was believed to be from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. His is one of the figures upon whom the whole continuity of English prose depends.

One of the few recent critics who have not been carried away by the current depreciation of More's English prose is that fine classical scholar whom we have lately lost, Professor J. S. Phillimore. Had he been spared, he would have been among the most enthusiastic supporters of this exhibition: and this Introduction would be incomplete without a reference to the article in the *Dublin Review* of 1913, in which he emphasizes More's position in the history of English prose. And there is a generalization about prose in that article which I wish to quote here:

> Poetry is a wind that bloweth where it listeth: a barbaric people may have great poetry, they cannot have great prose. Prose is an institution, part of the equipment of a civilization, part of its heritable wealth, like its laws, or its system of schooling, or its tradition of skilled craftsmanship.

English prose begins with English civilization. Shortly after Augustine had landed in Kent, the new art of writing was used to record the Kentish law in the vernacular language. Somewhat later, Bede was translating the Gospel of St. John in Northumbria. Fostered by King Alfred, and by great preachers like Wulfstan and Ælfric, English prose had achieved many great things in many different ways, long before the Norman Conquest. But the Norman Conquest gave a blow to English historical prose from which it did not recover for four centuries and a half. Englishmen, not merely of the upper classes but of the middle classes, all tried

to write French. Till the middle of the fourteenth century, English boys at school were taught their Latin, not in their native tongue, but through the medium of French—which did not help them to learn their Latin more quickly. Now Englishmen did not know French well enough to write great French prose, but this fad prevented them from trying to write great English prose. So England, the first great nation of modern Europe to develop a great national prose for the writing of history, was left utterly behind in the race. That is why, albeit England had many gallant crusaders, we have no record of their deeds which we can place against Joinville's *Life of St. Louis*. That is why, though the early English Franciscans were the glory of their order, we have nothing in English telling of their temptations and their triumphs, as the *Little Flowers of St. Francis* tells of the friars of Umbria and of the March of Ancona.

But whilst French competition destroyed English historical prose as it destroyed English in the King's court, and for purposes of law or government, nevertheless the English prose of devotion and contemplation continued. It was written by people who were too much in earnest to bother about courtly fashions. They wrote sometimes in Latin; but also in English, because either to them, or to the enclosed sisters for whom they often wrote, English was the language of passionate and instinctive utterance. Later, these works were often translated into Latin, for the use of those to whom Latin came more easily.

We are only beginning to realize how deeply and widely these works of contemplation were studied in medieval England: one work, the *Anchoresses' Rule*, can be proved to have had an astonishing popularity during three centuries, little as the writer ever thought of such popularity, or wished for it. He made his book only

for the personal use of three girls of gentle birth who had withdrawn from the world, and had to face its contempt: to use his phrase, "to bear with the arrogance of those who might have been their thralls." Yet this book spread everywhere. It was transcribed, adapted and altered in edition after edition, used by popular preachers and compilers of works of devotion, translated into French, translated into Latin by a Bishop of Salisbury for the use of his sisters; it becomes the great connecting link between Old English prose and the later devotional English prose of the fourteenth century, books such as those which have been recently reprinted in the "Orchard classics" under the editorship of Dom Roger Hudleston: the works of Richard Rolle of Hampole and of Walter Hilton; the *Cloud of Unknowing* and the *Revelations* of Julian of Norwich. Now the prose of Sir Thomas More is in the direct line of succession from these great fourteenth century books.

I quote from Professor A. W. Reed:

> No one who has read, for instance, his *Treatise of the Four Last Things*—"Death, Doom, Pain, and Joy"—and is familiar with our earlier prose writers, can fail to observe that More's prose style is like nothing that preceded it so much as the natural, lucid and easy prose of the school of Hilton. Nor is this surprising if we remember that More spent three or four years of his early manhood in the Charterhouse of London, where, and apparently when, Hilton's works were being copied. May we not say with some assurance that he knew, and knew well, the writings of Walter Hilton, and look with interest for the marks of their influence on his own direct and intimate prose? We know that throughout his life he continued to practise the austerities and self-discipline that he had known among the Carthusians. It may seem

incongruous to associate More's hair-shirt with his prose style; but both, I believe, derived from his early days of prayer, reading, recollection and discipline beside the monks of the London Charterhouse.

The Carthusians were, of course, a learned order, more prone to read and write in Latin than in English; but there was a remarkable revival of English among the learned in the early sixteenth century, of which More is the outstanding example—the ease with which More could write in Latin did not prevent his writing in English also. And the Carthusians of London seem to have shared in that renewed interest in English. One of the many British Museum manuscripts of Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* (Harleian 6579) belonged, we know, to the library of the London Charterhouse; and two brethren of that House, first William Tregoose and later William Exmewe, transcribed *The Cloud of Unknowing:* the manuscripts are still extant, one in the Bodleian and one at Parkminster. To read these manuscripts is to be brought very near to the most heroic episode in English history. I suppose John Houghton, Prior of the London Charterhouse, must often have handled the copy of *The Scale of Perfection* belonging to his House. It was John Houghton and his two fellow Priors whom More watched from his prison when they were being placed on hurdles to be drawn to Tyburn: More, "as one longing in that journey to have accompanied them," said to Margaret, "Lo, dost thou not see, Meg, that these blessed fathers be now as cheerfully going to their deaths as bridegrooms to their marriage." Some six weeks later three more fathers of the Charterhouse were hanged at Tyburn—one of these three was William Exmewe. The rest were chained up in the Tower, so that they could move neither hand nor foot, till they perished in tortures, of

which starvation must have been the smallest. More's adopted daughter, Margaret Gigs, who had married Dr. Clement, a former member of More's household and then court physician, managed to get access to their prison, and ministered to them in every way she could. When she was shut out, she made pathetic attempts to feed and comfort them through a hole in the roof. Margaret Clement was the most learned lady of her day in medicine and mathematics: Leland has praised her beauty, and at Windsor you can still see Holbein's record of her thoughtful face. You will find an account, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, of her knowledge of algebra, but nothing as to how she succoured the Carthusians at the grave risk of her life, still less as to how, on 6th July, 1570, thirty-five years to a day after the death of More, Margaret Clement lay dying in exile at Mechlin: "Calling her husband therefore she told him that the time of her departing was now come, for that there were standing about her bed the Reverend monks of the Charterhouse, whom she had relieved in prison in England, and did call upon her to come away with them, and that therefore she could stay no longer, because they did expect her."

All this may seem rather distant from More and his position in the history of English prose. But it is appropriate to this time and place. It was through Margaret Clement and her daughter, Mother Margaret Clement, that More's Hair-Shirt came to the Community of St. Monica, Louvain, and so to the Canonesses of Newton Abbot—and so, for a space, back to Chelsea, to the very spot where More used to wear it, greatly to the distress of his wife, Mistress Alice, who even on one occasion presumed to take counsel with his confessor on the subject. (More's ghostly father at that time was John Bouge, afterwards a Carthusian of Axholme.)

The links between More and his "school" and the Carthusians are many, and I am convinced, as Professor Reed is, that More's wonderful English is not unconnected with the masterpieces which Tregoose and Exmewe transcribed in the Charterhouse of London, and Greenhalgh in the Charterhouse of Sheen. But the contact would come not only through the Charterhouse; for the works of Rolle and Hilton were not only read by the religious: so far as the fifteenth century citizen read at all, he seems to have chiefly read these and similar books. So that when young Thomas More determined to be an author, not merely in Latin, but in English, he had not to make an English prose: he found it ready to his hand.

It is strange to reflect how our English prose had been handed down to him (and us) from the days of King Alfred, not by clerks working in the royal chancelleries, but through books originally written to be read in lonely anchor-holds like those of the three sisters of the *Rule*, or of Margaret Kirkby, for whom Hampole wrote his *Form of Perfect Living*. So we come to the days of Walter Hilton, and later still find More likewise addressing his first work in English prose to "his right entirely beloved sister in Christ, Joyeuce Leigh," a Poor Clare of the London House of Minoresses Enclosed. More writes his book—a translation of the Life of Picus, Earl of Mirandula—as a New Year's gift: "but whereas the gifts of other folk declare that they wish their friends to be worldly fortunate, mine testifieth that I desire to have you godly prosperous."

When we come to his *History of Richard III*, we find More experimenting with tricks of style; he anticipates the balanced phrase and cross-alliteration of *Euphues*, and then passes on to other experiments. More leaves it to Lyly to win a reputation two generations later by the dreary and monotonous repetition of ornaments

which he himself scorns to overdo. *Richard III* is many things: it is our first modern history; it is a passionate plea against the new statesmanship which was in the end to bring More to the block; it is a sermon against ambition; it is a work written with a conscious skill which never for a moment interferes with its intense earnestness. In the *Four Last Things* More's earnest writing is simpler and more direct. His controversial works he wrote by robbing himself of the few hours' sleep which his peculiarly heavy work allowed him; and we see him, for all his power, becoming sometimes diffuse—he had not time to write tersely. Henry VIII gave him the leisure which he needed, and in what he wrote in the Tower we can see at the highest the astonishing range of his varied powers: from the dramatic, humorous, easy anecdotes of the *Dialogue of Comfort* to the passionate intensity of the prayers written after his condemnation, and printed by Rastell in the 1557 volume. The Book of Hours handed down in the Denbigh family and exhibited at Chelsea contains, in the margin, prayers traditionally recorded as being in More's handwriting and as probably written during his imprisonment:[1] they are in fact the very prayers which Rastell tells us were written after he had been condemned to death.

To those who deny More's position in the history of English prose there is only one answer: to reprint a sufficient amount of More's writing, and then to ask, For variety of power, where earlier in English prose literature can you find anything equal? English prose has been popularized, and "soiled by all ignoble use." To-day, no less than in the days of Queen Mary, More's works are "worthy to be had and read of every Englishman that is studious to learn the eloquence and property of the English tongue."

[1] See below, p. 120.

And it is not only More's *Works* that need to be printed, but also the early biographies of which he is the hero. In the reign of Queen Mary an official biography of More was written by Archdeacon Nicholas Harpsfield. It has many claims on our attention. Here again, in the hands of Harpsfield, as in the hands of More, the prose of devotion, inherited from medieval times, is used for historical purposes. We might ask: Is Harpsfield's *Life of More* the last medieval Life of a Saint to be written in English, or the first scientific modern biography? It is both, at the same time. And, with this great claim on our attention, it has never yet been published. But it *has* been printed. Dr. Hitchcock and I hoped to have the honour of making the *editio princeps* for the Early English Text Society. But a year or two ago we discovered that we should not have that honour. For the Sisters of the Beaufort Street Convent, we found, had printed, in the monthly magazine of the Sisterhood, Thomas Garner's transcript of the Lambeth manuscript of Harpsfield's *Life*. During many years it was printed, two or three pages at a time, every month. It runs through fifty-five numbers, and was not quite completed, for the war and the consequent paper famine checked it. There is no file of it in the British Museum, but you may see it at the Convent.

And the fame of it has reached Moscow. Hence the letter, addressed to Dr. Hitchcock, to which I have already referred. The Director of the *Marx-Engels Institute* at Moscow writes for information about the periodical "Manhu,"

> in which Monsieur Delcourt has found some valuable hints about the Harpsfield Life. We applied to this gentleman last year, asking him to tell us how we could get the issues for 1910 mentioned in his book, but he answered that the copies had only been lent

to him by a Catholic sisterhood occupying, so far as he knew, the very premises where Sir Thomas More's house had stood at Chelsea. It proved impossible for us to find out the name and the address of these ladies. We would be infinitely obliged to you for letting us know what you have found out in this direction.

It was a disappointment to discover that we should not be the first to give Harpsfield, after three hundred and seventy years, the honour of print. But it was a much greater pleasure to realize that those of us who are working at the publication of the Tudor Lives of Sir Thomas More are privileged to be fellow-workers—to this extent at any rate—with the Sisters of the *Adoration Réparatrice*. It is not often that such an honour falls to the mere philologist.

And it is necessary work for all of us, because there is much in the story that Englishmen do not yet understand. The last hour of More's life has provided many anecdotes illustrating his demeanour on the scaffold. Everyone knows how he placed his beard so that it would not be cut by the headsman's axe, saying, "Pity that should be cut, that has never committed treason." The whole story was told—very unsympathetically—by the chronicler Edward Hall in the reign of Edward VI, and has been told over and over again till all its incidents are known. Here is Hall's account:

> This man was also counted learned, and as you have heard before he was Lord Chancellor of England, and in that time a great persecutor of such as detested the supremacy of the bishop of Rome, which he himself so highly favoured that he stood to it till he was brought to the scaffold on the Tower Hill where on a block his head was stricken from his shoulders and had no more harm.

This, by the way, is not a mere heartless jibe. It is an allusion to More's saying, when threatened with death, that a man might lose his head and have no harm. But we will continue with Mr. Edward Hall:

> I cannot tell whether I should call him a foolish wise man, or a wise foolish man, for undoubtedly he beside his learning had a great wit, but it was so mingled with taunting and mocking, that it seemed to them that best knew him, that he thought nothing to be well spoken except he had ministered some mock in the communication, insomuch as at his coming to the Tower, one of the officers demanded his upper garment for his fee, meaning his gown, and he answered, he should have it, and took him his cap, saying it was the uppermost garment that he had. Likewise, even going to his death at the Tower gate, a poor woman called unto him and besought him to declare that he had certain evidences of hers in the time that he was in office (which after he was apprehended she could not come by) and that he would entreat she might have them again, or else she was undone. He answered, Good woman, have patience a little while, for the king is good unto me that even within this half-hour he will discharge me of all businesses, and help thee himself. Also when he went up the stair on the scaffold, he desired one of the Sheriff's officers to give him his hand to help him up, and said, When I come down again, let me shift for myself as well as I can. Also the hangman kneeled down to him asking him forgiveness of his death (as the manner is), to whom he said, I forgive thee, but I promise thee that thou shalt never have honesty of the striking off my head, my neck is so short. Also when he should lay down his head on the block, he having a great gray beard, striked out his beard and

said to the hangman, I pray you let me lay my beard over the block lest ye should cut it; thus with a mock he ended his life.

These stories all ring true. It was characteristic of More to see the humorous side, even of martyrdom. But there are some other sayings, recorded by Stapleton, who probably got them through John Harris or his wife Dorothy. Dorothy Colly was maid to More's daughter Margaret, and went with her to the Tower to bury More's body; she wedded John Harris, More's Secretary, and after his death she handed to Stapleton, her fellow exile, the collections which her husband had made for a Life of More. From one or other of them—or more probably from both—Stapleton must have heard the story of what happened as More was on his way to the scaffold. And this is one incident of that story, as translated from Stapleton by one of the Tudor biographers:

Afterwards, as he passed, there came to him a citizen of Winchester, who had been with Sir Thomas before, and it was upon this occasion.

This poor man was grievously vexed with very vehement and grievous tentations of desperation, and could never be rid of it, either by counsel or prayer of his own or of his friends. At last a good friend of his brought him to Sir Thomas, being then Chancellor. Who, taking compassion of the poor man's misery, gave him the best counsel and advice he could. But it would not serve. Then fell he to his prayers for him, earnestly beseeching Almighty God to rid the poor man of his troubles of mind. He obtained it; for, after that, the Hampshire man was never troubled with it any more, so long as he would come to Sir Thomas More; but after he was impri-

soned and could have no access unto him, his tentation began again more vehement and troublesome than it was before. So he spent his days with a heavy heart, and without all hope of remedy.

But when he heard that Sir Thomas More was condemned, he posted from Winchester, hoping at least to see him as he should go to execution, and so determined to speak with him, come what would of it. And for that cause he placed himself in the way. And at his coming by, he thrust through the throng, and with a loud voice said, 'Mr. More, do you know me? I pray you for our Lord's sake, help me: I am as ill troubled as ever I was.' Sir Thomas answered, 'I remember thee full well. Go thy ways in peace, and pray for me: and I will not fail to pray for thee.'

And from that time after, so long as he lived, he was never troubled with that manner of tentation.

***

This story, of course, was not committed to writing till many years after More's death. But a detailed account of More's execution was sent at the time to Paris by some Frenchman who was present. Within three weeks of More's death it had been translated into Latin—and in Latin, German and Spanish versions, in manuscript and in print, it spread rapidly throughout western Europe. The French writer tells us that More did not say much when addressing the crowd round the scaffold. (We know, from Roper, that he had been specially warned by the King that he should not use many words.) But he *did* ask his friends to pray for him in this world, assuring them that he would pray for them *elsewhere*.

Only a few minutes before, More had been assuring the Winchester man, who had been so long sustained by his prayer, that he need have no fear lest such prayers were now about to cease. Did he, from the scaffold,

see the Winchester man still hovering on the outskirts of the crowd, and did he choose these words in order to give him a second assurance? We cannot tell. But at any rate these words are by far the best authenticated of all More's sayings on the scaffold. And perhaps they are not less worthy than his jests of being recorded in the history books. And perhaps, some day, they will be.

THE CHARGE OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

BY

FATHER RONALD KNOX

THE CHARGE OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

THERE is, I think, a healthy kind of paganism lying very near to the roots of this odd compost, human nature, which we shall certainly never get rid of, however much the rationalists try to argue with us, however much the moralists denounce us; a kind of paganism which insists that mute and material things have the power to carry spiritual influences. If I should be invited to go and stay at a country house in which a baronet shot himself, to sleep in the same room in which he shot himself, on the very anniversary of the day on which he shot himself, wearing the same pyjamas which the baronet was wearing when he shot himself, it is an odd circumstance, but I shall not find it easy to get to sleep. The rationalist assures me that the room to-night is the same room as it was last night, that it is no different, considered in itself, from any other room in the house; and that the pyjamas are still in good condition. That is all quite true. And the moralist assures me that it is very wrong of me not to go to sleep; it argues that I have a superstitious nature, and that it is a very degraded thing to have a superstitious nature. But all their well-meant efforts are unavailing, once they have put the light out. At any other time the confidences of the rationalist and of the moralist would have the power to send me to sleep immediately. But they cannot send me to sleep in the baronet's bed, on the anniversary of the baronet's death, in the baronet's pyjamas.

The Church fully understands this instinct of ours, even when she does not approve of it. I have been assured that in one of the great pilgrimages of Brittany —I think it is the pilgrimage of La Troménie—there is a particular stone which the procession has to pass on its way; and when they get to that stone, a Druidical stone which was there long before the Christian religion came into that part of the country, the people all go out of their way to make a circle round it. I say the people in the ecclesiastical sense; the priests do not walk round the stone, because they know that it is only a heathen superstition. But they have the good sense to look the other way and pretend they do not notice that anything odd is happening, because they realize that when a superstition goes back to the time of the Druids it is very hard to shake it out of people. And instead of simply decrying such things as fooleries, the Church has very sensibly provided us with observances of her own, to give us something else to think about. She gives us the saints' days, anniversaries in which she encourages us especially to think about this or that saint. She gives us places of pilgrimage, holy places, where we can focus our devotion on a given spot. And she preserves, jealously, the relics of the saints, so that we may hold in our hands and press to our lips material objects which do really convey, by their very touch, an influence and a benediction. She does not make the silly Puritan mistake of trying to outlaw the pagan part of our nature, she adopts it, and hallows it, and turns it to her own ends.

And I think you can say that even if we thought of Sir Thomas More merely as a great historical figure, dead these four hundred years, even if we left out of account the fact that he has been beatified, or even the fact that he was a Catholic, we should have rather an eerie sort of feeling, rather an uncanny sort of feeling, about the present occasion. Here are we as near as

makes no difference to the exact anniversary of his death, as near as makes no difference to the exact spot where he lived, the ground impregnated, you would think, with the echoes of his personality, occupying ourselves with seeing a collection of exhibits which, for all they are material things, have yet been in contact somehow, with his living personality. If we were just pagans, we should be expecting to see ghosts. If we were spiritualists, we should be expecting to get psychic messages. But being Christians, which is something better than either, we can feel that we are in contact, not with a preternatural but with a supernatural influence. If we were spiritualists, we should expect to catch some echo of the "Tilly-vally" which was a favourite expression while he lived on earth. Being Christians, we hope rather to catch some echo of the Alleluias which he sings in heaven. We are here on pilgrimage.

But there is another way of looking at it. I hope you have all read detective stories, and if you have read detective stories you have probably come across the kind of detective procedure which is known as "reconstructing the crime." You get hold of the person you suspect of being the criminal, if possible on some anniversary of his crime, or at least in outward conditions which recall the crime, on the very spot where the crime was committed, and with all the accessories present which were present when the crime was committed, and you hope in that way to bring him to his knees and to wring out of him a confession of his guilt. Well, that is in a sense what we are doing here. A great crime was committed four hundred years ago, one of the foulest crimes in history. And while it is true that the principal author of it was a king for whom very few people have a good word nowadays, in a sense the responsible author of that crime was Protestant England. Not in the sense

that when it took place England was a Protestant country; but in this sense—that the England which took that crime lying down, which raised no voice of protest against it and continued to make a hero of the bloody tyrant who was guilty of it, was an England whose conscience was already debauched and its silence already purchased with the spoils of the monasteries. The death of More was the most signal triumph of the new lot of courtiers over the old lot of courtiers, and it was the new lot of courtiers who made, in the long run, the Reformation.

I do not know if it is very tactless to say all this, because after all there may be non-Catholics in my audience at the moment. I hope there are, because there is this to be said for non-Catholics—they sometimes have money about them; and I imagine that our presence here this afternoon is not wholly unconnected with financial considerations. But, you see, I want to have non-Catholics here while we are reconstructing the crime, because they are the criminals. It was in order to get rid of the Papacy and concentrate all authority in England in the hands of the civil power that Blessed Thomas More had to be got out of the way. And when they boast of the priceless gift of religious liberty which was won for them by the Reformation, and the glorious part which England has played, as a Protestant power, in the history of Europe, let them not forget what that achievement cost—it cost the life of a man who was acclaimed by his own contemporaries as the paragon of an Englishman, a man whose fame all these centuries of anti-Catholic propaganda have never succeeded in besmirching.

Indeed, I think it is safe to say that Thomas More was one of the most successful men who ever lived. What after all is success when you come to look into it? There are, I think, three ambitions which it is

reasonable for a man to aim at, if he really wants to make the most of life. One is, that he should rise by his own efforts to a commanding position among his fellow-citizens; that is the ambition cherished by the man of action, who seeks to win the applause of his own contemporaries. One is, that he should express what is in him by means of artistic or literary composition, and leave himself in that way a permanent monument of achievement; it is the ambition of the artist, who seeks to win the admiration of posterity. One is, that he should bear witness in every action of his life to the truth by which he lives, and if possible seal that witness by his death; it is the ambition of the saint, who seeks to win the favour of Almighty God. And in Blessed Thomas More those three crowns were happily united; England delighted to honour him, posterity still acclaims him, and he has won a prouder title than either of these in the courts of heaven.

For that very reason, it is difficult to give a lecture about Thomas More without feeling that your treatment has been ridiculously inadequate; that you have only touched the fringes of the subject. I am fortunate, then, in being the first of a series; I can choose my treatment for myself, and leave my successors to bear the blame if justice is not done to him. I want, therefore, to specialize; I want to single out one particular point in connection with More's history and to concentrate on that alone. That point is his one vulnerable point, in the estimation of to-day. I mean his attitude towards religious tolerance. More was a great man, it is everywhere admitted. But was he a good man? And if he was a good man, how was it that he sent heretics to their death at the stake, and not only did so, but defended in his published writings the principle, now so unpopular, of religious coercion by means of the secular arm?

I do not think we need delay long over the fact that he

did condemn heretics to death. Nobody now, I imagine, believes in the stories which were circulated to represent More as a kind of ogre who gloated over his unhappy victims and subjected them to unnecessary barbarities; stories about his having them tied up to a tree in his garden and flogged while he looked on. Those stories are quoted by More himself as a ridiculous instance of the kind of thing people will believe about you when you hold a public position; and Foxe, who has preserved them independently, has brought forward no sort of independent evidence to establish them, and is not even consistent with himself in his manner of relating them. No, there is no reason to think that More did anything beyond what would have fallen to the lot of any statesman in his position at the time—endeavoured to persuade heretics to recant, and if they refused or relapsed into heresy after a bogus recantation, condemned them to the stake. And if only he had kept quiet about it, there would be no difficulty at all about defending his conduct, even to the satisfaction of people who regard all religious coercion as wrong. We could have pointed out that he did not make the law, he only administered it—very much the defence which the late Home Secretary put forward the other day against his critics. If More condemned men to death for heresy, he was only administering the existing law, like the judges who, up to the end of the eighteenth century, condemned men to death for stealing a horse or a sheep. It was not his business to be wiser or more lenient than the Constitution which he represented.

But we happen to know that More did defend, even in theory, the practice of punishing obstinate heretics with the extreme penalty. And some of his critics, Froude for example, have not been slow to point the moral. What right had More to complain, they ask, if his enemies when they got the upper hand meted out to

him in his turn the punishment which he himself had meted out to others? The argument, so stated, is overstated; it would make it impossible for us to admire any man of the period who suffered for his religious convictions, and notably Thomas Cranmer. Let me read you Lingard's account of the execution of Joan Bocher, the Anabaptist: "From the unwillingness of Edward to consent to her execution, a year elapsed before she suffered. It was not that his humanity revolted from the idea of burning her at the stake; in his estimation she deserved the severest punishment which the law could inflict. But the object of his compassion was the future condition of her soul in another world. He argued that as long as she remained in error she remained in sin, and that to deprive her of life in that state was to consign her soul to everlasting torments. Cranmer was compelled to moot the point with the young theologian; the objection was solved by the example of Moses, who had condemned blasphemers to be stoned, and the king with tears in his eyes put his signature to the warrant." It never fell to the lot of Thomas More to be so directly responsible for the death of a heretic; chiefly because King Henry VIII had not the same delicacy of conscience as his extraordinary son. Cranmer never disagreed with his judges over the propriety of burning heretics, he only disagreed with them as to whether he was a heretic or not. And the same may be said, roughly, of all the people who shared the mind of that period; even the Anabaptists, when they decried the death penalty, were only decrying its use against Anabaptists.

But this is only a debating answer; we are here to consider the virtues of Blessed Thomas More, and we shall hardly go away satisfied with the conclusion that at any rate he was no worse a man than Thomas Cranmer. And first of all we have to meet a charge of incon-

sistency. The accusation brought against More is that his own unbiassed judgment was contrary to any form of religious coercion, but that later, when he entered the service of Henry the Eighth, he pocketed his scruples and not only abetted religious coercion but brought himself to defend it. The passage which represents his earlier views, for the purposes of this argument, is a passage in the Utopia, of which we had best consider a short extract. Utopus, the mythical king of Utopia, "made a law that every man might be of what religion he pleased, and might endeavour to draw others to it by the force of argument and by amicable and modest ways, but without bitterness against those of other opinions; but that he ought to use no other force than that of persuasion, and was neither to mix with it reproaches nor violence; and such as did otherwise were to be condemned to banishment or slavery. He . . . seemed to doubt whether those different forms of religion might not all come from God, who might inspire man in a different manner, and be pleased with this variety. . . And supposing that only one religion was really true and the rest false, he imagined that the native force of truth would at last break forth and shine bright, if supported only by the force of argument. . ." The only exception to this principle among the Utopians is their treatment of men who do not believe in the immortality of the soul: "They never raise any that hold these maxims either to honours or offices, nor employ them in any public trust, but despise them as men of base and sordid minds. Yet they do not punish them, because they lay this down as a maxim, that a man cannot make himself believe whatever he likes."

Now, as we shall see later, this is not a direct contradiction of More's subsequent views on tolerance. For it is to be observed that the tolerance of the Utopians did not extend to those who tried to urge their private religious

opinions with bitterness, with reproaches, or with violence; and More's stern attitude in his later writings towards the heretics of his own time is largely based on the fact that they themselves were guilty of violence against Catholics, wherever they were allowed to get the upper hand. It is to be remembered in particular that the sack of Rome in 1527, by a force consisting chiefly of Lutherans, was accompanied by indescribable barbarities, which might well serve to justify reprisals. But, indeed, it is doubtful how far we can set out to defend the Utopia at all without losing our sense of humour. It is true that when the book first appeared it was labelled *De Optimo Reipublicae Statu*, "On the best form of a Republic," and in common usage the word Utopia is taken to mean a place in which all goes right and nothing goes wrong. But to suppose that More would seriously have liked to exchange the usages of England for that of his Utopia in real life is to forget the irresponsibility of the humanists, their love of supporting paradox merely for its own sake, and of suggesting methodical doubts without being prepared to support them. If More's Utopia was really a tract, in the sense in which Morris' *News from Nowhere* is a tract, then we must credit More with a belief, not only in complete religious toleration, but in community of goods, in a married clergy, in a female priesthood, in the remarriage of divorced persons, and in several other heterodox propositions which he would quite certainly have repudiated. He himself in the epilogue to the work has guarded himself against a too strict interpretation of his motives, when he writes: "Many things came to my mind, which in the manners and laws of that people seemed to be instituted and founded of no good reason"; he mentions the community of goods particularly. It is clear, then, that the Utopia was a youthful *jeu d'esprit*, which was intended, indeed, to draw attention to some abuses of the author's

own day, but not to be accepted as a serious programme for their reformation.

Though indeed it is difficult to see why More should not have been allowed to change his views on the subject, without being accused of truckling to the Henrician tyranny in doing so. Between the time when More wrote his Utopia and the date at which his Dialogue appeared, much had been happening in Europe. It would have been possible for a young man in 1516 to feel that a few Lollard ranters, whose complete sanity might well be doubted, were being hardly treated when they were sent to the stake; it would be possible for the same man, a year or two later, to revise his views on the significance and the danger of heresy, when he had seen Germany burst into flame and Europe threatened with disruption by the rise of the Lutheran schism. Facts are sometimes shrewd counsellors. The attitude of Pius IX towards the whole Liberal movement in Europe undoubtedly underwent a change, but it was a change induced by his experience of Liberalism as a working force. A change of view is not always an inconsistency.

Let us now examine More's considered opinion on the repression of heresy as we find it expressed in his *locus classicus* on the subject, the Dialogue against Tindal, published in 1528. The last seven chapters of the Dialogue are concerned, *ex professo*, with religious persecution.

He has been detailing the sinister consequences, theological and practical, of the Lutheran schism, and at the beginning of Ch. 13 he adds: "The fear of these outrages and mischiefs to follow upon such sects and heresies, with the proof that men have had in some countries thereof, have been the cause that princes and people have been constrained to punish heresies by terrible death, whereas else more easy ways had been taken with them." This is the cue for a consideration

of the subject, which had been raised by his imaginary interlocutor earlier in the Dialogue. It will be well to observe from the outset that in More's view the death penalty, or at least the harsh and exemplary manner of the death penalty, decreed against heresy, is dictated by practical considerations; more lenient measures would have been used if they could have sufficed to secure its repression. At the same time, he will not allow that the punishment of heresy is merely deterrent or remedial; it is retributive punishment: heresy, he says, is in any case "well worthy to be as sore as any other fault, since there is no fault that more offendeth God." The right, then, to punish heresy is based upon its intrinsic malice, but the advisability of punishing it depends on circumstances, and the circumstances which have actually made this necessary are the oppressive measures used by the Turks and heretics against Christians. In proof of this he points out that for several centuries after the first preaching of the Gospel we find no evidence of persecution by the Church. In the existing state of things, he cannot find it reasonable that "Christian princes should suffer the Catholic Christian people to be oppressed by Turks or by heretics worse than Turks."

The interlocutor hopes to find here a ground of agreement, and suggests that it would be an excellent thing if a compact could be arranged on both sides, the Church on her part and the Turks or heretics as the case may be on their part agreeing to refrain from violent methods and allow the truth to win its own way by peaceful methods. The reply is a distinction; the author agrees that such a compact between Christians and Turks would be an excellent thing, since the conversions which would result would more than outweigh the possible perversions. But he cannot allow such a truce with heretics, since it would enable the heretics to go on perverting Catholics, while the Church would not stand to gain

any souls except such as were hers already by right of baptism.

That distinction is, I think, of capital importance. The martyr cannot have been so ignorant of history as not to know that Mahommedanism is in its origins a corruption of Christianity; that the nucleus from which it originated was a nucleus at least nominally Christian. The distinction, therefore, is not, surely, between non-Christian religions as such and heresies as such, but between religions which have a long history behind them, a prescriptive right to existence, and religions which are mere mushroom growths, parasites so to speak on the body of Christendom. And I think if he had been pressed—he does not develop the argument—the martyr would have put Protestantism as we know it, Protestantism as an established and rooted system, on the same level with Mahommedanism; that he would have been content with the modern *modus vivendi* by which, normally at least, neither Turks nor Protestants persecute Catholics, and Catholics exercise a like toleration in their turn.

The Protestants of his own time appeared to him otherwise. He did not think of them as men of a different religion; he thought of them as Catholics who were not doing their duty as Catholics, either intellectually or morally. And the law had a right to make them do their duty; would exercise that right so long as it saw in their propaganda a menace to the existing order of society. That heresy did involve a social menace, he strongly insists. It is not, he goes on to explain, the clergy who persecute; the clergy when they find obstinate or relapsed heretics punish them only by excommunication, and it is entirely the State's doing if a State sentence of death results upon the Church's verdict of excommunication. We, with three and a half centuries of Protestant beef-and-beer Constitutionalism behind us, are apt to

smile at the notion that Protestantism can be a political peril. But it must be remembered that in More's day, Continental Protestantism was very much in the same position in which Russian Socialism was just after the fall of the Tsar. There was a Menshevik Section, the Lutherans in Germany, the Calvinists and Zwinglians in Switzerland; there was a Bolshevik section, the Anabaptists. And there was no means of knowing that the Anabaptists would not be the more successful as they were certainly the more logical party. It was, I fancy, owing to the personality of one or two religious leaders—the men who wiped out the Peasants' Revolt in blood—that Continental Protestantism became the decorous, Church-and-State movement it was and still is. But for them the doctrine of the reign of grace might have had far more sensational results for the world's rulers. As it was, the extreme wing of Protestantism brought a king of England to the scaffold.

But the repression of heresy, the author makes it clear as he goes on, is not merely designed to prevent the political dangers which might arise from a general triumph of heretical principles. It is the duty of Christian princes to protect their simple subjects from the danger of being seduced by the plausibilities of false doctrine; and it is in the exercise of this duty that they find it incumbent upon them to check the spread of heresy in every possible way. Where simple people do fall away, misled by men of seeming holiness, their guilt is less than that of those who so mislead them; yet it is their fault none the less for wilfully preferring the authority of private teachers to that of the Church, which depends upon its own continuous tradition, not on any private judgment, for the interpretation of scripture. But it is evidently the heretical teachers that he has chiefly in view when he recommends the punishment of heretics; it is these wolves in sheep's clothing

that the secular power is chiefly concerned to expose and to exterminate, if they cannot correct them.

Such was More's judgment; I do not intend to criticize it. Indeed, I doubt if any of us is in a position to criticize it. For More was a child of his age, and we are children of ours; no one century can judge another without its own bias, and who is to say which is right? Since his day the whole notion of religious toleration has become part of our world-atmosphere. Invented by the Catholics of Maryland, it remained long unaccepted by the Protestant world, and it is doubtful whether its acceptance in Europe is not chiefly due to that general decline in the sense of religious certainty which marked the days of Hume and Voltaire. But whatever its origins, it is to-day undisputed; I doubt if any daily paper would accept an article in which religious persecution was explicitly advocated, even if it were written by the Dean of St. Paul's. We cannot really put ourselves outside this modern atmosphere; for that very reason, it is important that we should see how a very enlightened mind and a very delicate conscience reacted towards the idea of toleration in the sixteenth century.

More's position in the matter does not, in fact, bear any comparison with Cranmer's. Of Cranmer I think it is true to say that he perished by the sword which he himself had sharpened. When he hurried Joan Bocher to the stake, he was simply setting up his own private judgment against hers. As she herself pointed out, it was not long since that they had burned Anne Askew for denying Transubstantiation; they, Cranmer and his fellows, now admitted that they had been wrong; how could they be sure that they were right in burning Joan Bocher because she denied the Incarnation? Why should not she put a private interpretation upon the words "Verbum Caro factum est," if Cranmer put a private interpretation on the words "Hoc est Corpus

meum?" "In the end," she said, "you will come to believe this also, when you have read the scriptures and understood them." She could hardly be expected to foresee that a time would come when an assertion of Transubstantiation and a denial of the hypostatic Union would be equally tolerated in the Church of England. But she did see that complete toleration was the logical corollary of private judgment, and Cranmer did not.

More's position was altogether different. He saw a civilization which had served Europe for centuries, and had for centuries been the whole atmosphere of Europe, breaking up under his eyes; the Christian faith, hitherto a tradition, being represented as a mere inference from a string of Bible texts; men who had taken vows of celibacy breaking that vow, and still claiming the title of Christian teachers; the fanaticisms of the common people restrained, not by any respect for ecclesiastical authorities, but by a vague deference to the views of one or two self-constituted interpreters of Scripture. Had an atheist been brought before him for trial, he would have been inclined, I think, to pity him as a harmless madman; what he would not tolerate was a new-fangled teaching which persisted in describing itself as Christianity. Such aberrations he regarded as wilful, and because they were wilful, a fit subject for punishment.

His gracious spirit lives for our example, the beau idéal of a Catholic Englishman; so Catholic in his reverence for the Saints, for the Mass, for the holy souls, so English in his impatience of shams, in his bluff humour, in his lucid sanity of judgment. We, English Catholics of a later time, are tempted to think of this Catholic Englishry as a reconciliation of opposites; why should we? Only because the muddled mind of our contemporaries has made us, despite ourselves, half despair of England.

But is there any real reason to fear that the dream for which More died was only another Utopia? Is there really no reason to hope that the country which produced More, of whose genius More was so typical, will become a Catholic country once again?

THE WITNESS TO ABSTRACT TRUTH

BY

HILAIRE BELLOC

THE WITNESS TO ABSTRACT TRUTH

I COME to speak to you to-day upon the Blessed Thomas More, and I come to speak of him under one aspect alone; for what one man can say in the few brief moments of a public address should not, upon such a subject, touch more than one aspect, lest his audience be confused. But that aspect is surely the chief one in connection with such a name.

I come to speak to you of the nature of his sacrifice; not of his life, its scholarship, its humour, its worldly greatness, his voluntary decline therefrom; the affection which he gave and received; the multiple humanity which has endeared him to those who least understand his last and tremendous act. For we must all remember that it has become the fashion among those who least comprehend or least love the Catholic Church to make certain exceptions in her favour, inverted scapegoats, as it were, and to cite in history one or two Catholics out of the great host of martyrs and confessors and doctors and plain saints, let alone of common Catholic men and women, whom they deign to praise; there is St. Francis of Assisi, because he was fond of animals; there is (for some of them) St. Bernard, because he stopped a riot against money-lenders; and there is the Blessed Thomas More—because when you are praising Cranmer, Henry his master, and, for all I know, Thomas Cromwell himself, you must have some counterweight in order to look liberal and broadminded. And the Blessed Thomas More is there ready to hand.

Now all that, I confess, I despise as it deserves to be

despised; nor am I here to speak of those other excellencies in him which *we* deservedly praise, and for the right motives—his love of justice and of the poor, his contempt of wealth, his self-discipline in life, his merry bearing of the burden of this world—but only the fashion in which he left it.

What I am here to-day to emphasise is this: the Blessed Thomas More died in the support of *one* particular isolated truth, because it *was* the truth, and for no other reason. He did not make a sacrifice of this or that—he had made plenty of sacrifices—he did not give up, as heroic men give up around us day by day, position and income and the comfort of those who are dearest to them for the general Faith. He gave up life itself, deliberately; he accepted a violent death as of a criminal, not even for the Faith as a whole, but on *one* particular small point of doctrine—to wit, the supremacy of the See of Peter.

Now let me discuss the magnitude of this act. It is of sufficient greatness that it was performed for one isolated point of truth. But there was much more. It was a sacrifice not supported.

This it is that I desire to affirm, to reaffirm, to repeat, and to repeat again. This is that to which I desire to bear witness and which, had I the power, I would make prominent in every history. Not that this unique man gave up much for his conscience; that, to the honour of mankind, myriads have done and will do. Not even that he gave up life itself in that cause. Not even that he gave it up for one detached article out of so many. But rather that he found it in him so to act without support: a triumph of the will.

Now consider how men are supported in their rare heroisms.

There is in the first place the support of those who, weaker than the martyr himself, wish him well; those for

whom he is a symbol, and who turn to him secretly as a flag-bearer, and by whom they hope perhaps to be later reconciled with that which they know to be the truth, but which they have not the courage to proclaim. He was not supported by an ambient fashion; he was not even supported, properly speaking, by a tradition, and—the most awful thing of all—he was not supported from within by anything more than that supreme instrument of action, the Catholic Will.

Newman said very well that we all die alone; but this is to die alone indeed! To allow oneself to be killed, of one's own choice, in full life, rather than to pay the price of yielding upon one dry, narrow intellectual point; having to applaud one and to support one and to sustain one; neither enthusiasm within nor the sense of agreement from others without.

Let me put before you those two points. They are essential to an understanding of the scale upon which the martyr acted.

First, I say, he was not supported from within.

He had no enthusiasm for the papacy; he had fashioned for himself no tradition of defending it; no habit, no formed body of argument and action in its favour. He did not defend the papacy (in a day when its rights were everywhere doubted) because it was second nature to him. No : just the other way.

All his life he had been—as indeed was every man of intelligence, judgment and heart, in the turning point between the Middle Ages and the Modern—a reformer in the full sense of that word. He had been in his youth the English Erasmus, denouncing with contempt, as did a thousand others, not only the manifold and crying abuses into which clerical organisation had fallen, but many things which were not abuses at all, rather honest devotions, if a little exaggerated. His enthusiasm,

the flame of his thought, his memories of sharp emotion in those affairs were all in tune with that flame of reforming zeal, which can so easily in such a moment be deflected into rebellion against the unity of Christendom. About this particular point of Papal Supremacy he had never worried. He had come out of a generation profoundly shaken in the matter; its intellectuals, contemptuous of the state into which the See of Rome had fallen, full of memories of the Schism and of the Councils, far from admiring the temporal pomp, and what was worse, the mechanical revenues of the Papal Court. Had Thomas More's death been a death for the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Sacrament of the Altar, for the Most Holy Mother of God, for the golden light which is thrown across the earth by the movement of the wings of the Faith, it would have been quite another matter. He would have had ample support from within. His affections would have been engaged, and the whole man would have been at work. So has it been with great troops of martyrs. But not with him.

He had in this matter of the Supremacy closely examined the thing, as one might any other historical problem: "reading it up" and thinking out the pros and cons. And at one moment—a man of very grave reading, an excellent lawyer, with a brain like a razor for separating one category from another—he had hesitated whether the supremacy of the Pope over Christendom were man-made or not. He had inclined to think it a man-made thing. When he had thrashed the whole thing out fully and thoroughly, he came to his conclusion, as might a judge, without "affection," without any particular movement of the heart. The Supremacy of Peter and of his successors (he decided) was of divine origin.

So far so good. That one point being isolated—intellectual, not moral, in no way attached to the heart, nothing that could inflame a man—he kept it carefully

segregated and clear. He was willing to admit the succession of Anne's child; to take oaths of loyalty of any degree and in any respect, save in that one point of the Supremacy. And did he run out to defend it with warmth? Far from it! He kept it in the background; he tried not to answer upon it; he followed the debates as might a counsel for the defence, making his points, reserving action.

All that is very cold and very disappointing. But he died—which is more than you and I would have done. And he died merrily.

Nor was this extraordinary man supported from without. I am not sure that such support is not of even greater value (though I admit that the idea is paradoxical) than support from within.

Many a man and woman, I fancy, have died martyrs or have suffered some lesser inconvenience after having within their own hearts and intelligences suffered grievous assaults against the Faith, but consoled by the ambient atmosphere of Christendom. "I may through my own fault and negligence have lost my firm hold upon the Faith, but it is my duty to support others who are in a better case. They all agree. They regard me as their standard bearer; and I will not yield." Such martyrs, I fancy, will have a very high place; for to serve the Faith by an act of will is greater than to serve it without interruption from any human frailty. But at any rate Thomas More was not of this sort. He was not supported from without.

After four hundred years we have to-day forgotten how the matter looked to the men of the early sixteenth century. The average Englishman had little concern with the quarrel between the Crown and Rome. It did not touch his life. The Mass went on just the same and all the splendour of religion; the monasteries were still in being everywhere, there was no interruption whatso-

ever. Most of the great bodies—all the bishops except Fisher—had yielded. They had not yielded with great reluctance, but as a matter of course. Here and there had been protests, and two particular monastic bodies had burst, as it were, into flame. But that was exceptional. To the ordinary man of that day, anyone, especially a highly placed official, who stood out against the King's policy was a crank.

We must firmly seize that or we do not understand the period at all. Kings had quarrelled with Popes over and over again. In the matter of doctrine and practice Henry was particularly devout, and strenuously Catholic. Kings had been reconciled with Popes over and over again. For generations the King of England had in practice been absolute master of his realm, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred papal action was but a formality. It would be bad enough to make oneself unpopular and to stand out and to look a fool in defence of one particular point of definition—which, after all, might have no meaning a few years hence, when Anne Boleyn should be dead, perhaps, and the two parties to the quarrel reconciled again. That was the point of view (among other millions) of the Blessed Thomas More's wife, and he was very much what is called a family man, tolerant of nagging. That was the point of view of pretty well all his friends. And it was the more difficult to resist because they loved him and desired to save him. Had they united in chorus to say, "This fine strong man is standing out; would we were of the same metal!" it would have been a support. But that was not their attitude at all. Their attitude was rather, "This imaginative and highly-strung man, who has done more than one silly thing in his time, who threw away his great position as Chancellor and who in his youth published a Socialist sort of a book, is doing it again! You never know what he will do next! Really, he

is such a good fellow that somebody ought to argue him out of the nonsense!"

No. He was not supported from without.

Let me end by saying that he was not to be supported by posterity. There are men who can repose under the strain of an ordeal in the conviction that their suffering is a seed for the future. I will confess to the superstition that men like More have, in my judgment, some confused vision of the future. If he had, he must have known that his sacrifice was apparently in vain. Could he return to this earth to-day (and I am sure that it must be the least of his desires!) he would not find that he had sown a seed. He would not find—I do not say that he had saved the Faith in this country—even that the Faith had retained such a hold on English life as a reasonable man might have hoped for in 1535. Should the Blessed Thomas More return to life in this, his own country, to-day he would find the Faith an alien thing and himself praised as what I have called a "scapegoat the other way round," a "scapegoat *a rebours*," an exception which must be praised in order to give the more elbow room for praising the vile spirits who served the court. At all this he would smile, being a man of humour; or more probably does now smile. At any rate he has not the support of posterity.

If ever a man died alone, he died alone.

And the moral is clear. It is our business to give up all for whatever is truth, whether it appeals to our emotion or not; whether we have others with us or not; whether our mood concurs or repels. The intelligence is absolute in its own sphere. Intelligence commands us to accept the truth, and for the truth a man must lay down his life.

Let all those, therefore, who in defining the truth, though it be but in one corner and with regard to one arid thing, to them seeming dead, invoke the patronage

of this very national Englishman. His fun, his courage, his scholarship will be of advantage to them; so also will his sanctity—if in such days as these I may speak of such a quality.

A TURNING-POINT IN HISTORY

BY

G. K. CHESTERTON

A TURNING POINT IN HISTORY

Blessed Thomas More is more important at this moment than at any moment since his death, even perhaps the great moment of his dying; but he is not quite so important as he will be in about a hundred years time. He may come to be counted the greatest Englishman, or at least the greatest historical character in English history. For he was above all things historic; he represented at once a type, a turning point and an ultimate destiny. If there had not happened to be that particular man at that particular moment, the whole of history would have been different.

We might put the point shortly by saying that the best friend of the Renaissance was killed as the worst enemy of the Reformation. More was a humanist, not only in the sense in which many crabbed and pedantic scholars earned that name by their real services to Greek and Latin scholarship, but in the sense that his scholarship was really both human and humane. He had in him, at that relatively early date, all that was best in Shakespeare and Cervantes and Rabelais; he had not only humour but fantasy. He was the founder of all the Utopias; but he used Utopia as what it really is, a playground. His Utopia was partly a joke; but since his time Utopians have seldom seen the joke. He was even famous for taking things lightly; he talked, I believe, about whipping children with peacock's feathers; and there came to be a legend that he died laughing. We have to realise him as a man thus full of the Renaissance before we come with a sort of shock to the reality of his more serious side.

The great Humanist was above all a Superhumanist. He was a mystic and a martyr; and martyrdom is perhaps the one thing that deserves the cant phrase of practical mysticism. But he was not, like so many mystics of his time, one who lost his common sense in face of the mysteries. And it will remain a permanent and determining fact, a hinge of history, that he saw, in that first hour of madness, that Rome and Reason are one. He saw at the very beginning, what so many have now only begun to see at the end: that the real hopes of learning and liberty lay in preserving the Roman unity of Europe and the ancient Christian loyalty for which he died.

A GREAT LORD CHANCELLOR

BY

LORD JUSTICE RUSSELL

A GREAT LORD CHANCELLOR

When I was invited to offer some remarks to-day upon the subject of Sir Thomas More, I was asked to deal with the matter from the point of view of his judicial work. In my ignorance, I thought to examine the reports of the cases which he had decided and from the bulk to select a few suitable samples for exposition and comment. On investigation I found this to be quite impossible, for, by some chance or coincidence, the contemporary reports report no decisions of any kind during the two and a half years of More's Chancellorship.

In these circumstances, what I propose to do is, to give a very brief outline of his career, calling attention to incidents illustrative of the qualities which combined to make him the great and illustrious man that he was.

During the period of this exhibition someone will have spoken on each day about Sir Thomas More, and since originality in biography leads to inaccuracy and untruth, overlapping and repetition are well nigh unavoidable. Those present to-day who have already heard portions of this dissertation issuing from other lips must be patient and forgiving.

More was born on the 7th February 1478, in the reign of Edward IV. His ancestry is of interest, and justifies the Chancellor's own description of himself as born of a family honest but not distinguished: "Familia non celebri sed honesta natus." His grandfather, John More was the butler to the Hon. Society of Lincolns' Inn. In 1464 he was raised to the office of seneschal or steward. In 1470, in reward for his services, first as butler

and then as seneschal, he was admitted to membership of the Society; ultimately he was called to the bar and became a bencher. When John More, the grandfather, became seneschal, he was succeeded as butler by his son John. This John More, like his father, became in turn a member of Lincoln's Inn and a barrister. More than this, he was, about 1518, appointed to be a judge of the Common Pleas, and, about 1520 to be a judge of the King's Bench. His greatest claim to fame, however, is this, that he was the father of Sir Thomas More. Such was Thomas More's respectable but unaristocratic origin, the recital of which provokes these thoughts. Much credit redounds to Lincoln's Inn for giving virtue its due reward, and to the Mores for displaying worth and integrity sufficient to overcome the prejudices of the age.

After educational years spent as a boy at Threadneedle Street, and as a youth at Oxford and at Lincoln's Inn, More was called to the bar, where his success was ultimately great. One biography declares that "there was . . . in none of the King's Courts any matter of importance in controversy wherein he was not of counsel with one of the parties, choosing the justest side, and therefore for the most part he went away victorious."

I cannot help feeling that this statement is not entirely reliable, for (according to modern standards and methods) it is difficult to see how the power to select his side arose.

At the age of twenty-six he was in the House of Commons, where he incurred the keen displeasure of Henry VII, by leading a successful opposition to the grant of a subsidy to the King. By way of revenge the King, believing the son not to be worth powder and shot, imprisoned the father until a fine of a hundred pounds was paid. Thus in those days were the sins of the son visited on the father.

Between 1510 and 1520 More exercised some judicial duties as under-sheriff of London. In 1521 he was knighted and made one of the Privy Council, having earned great renown by pleading successfully for the Pope and obtaining restoration to His Holiness of a ship claimed as forfeited to the King. In 1525 he was Speaker of the House of Commons, and in this capacity fell foul of the Lord Chancellor Cardinal Wolsey in circumstances which I will narrate later.

At this time Sir Thomas More was in high favour with Henry VIII. True it is that the question of the marriage to Queen Katherine was in the air; but matters had not reached a crisis. The position was this: Cardinal Wolsey had sown the seed of what was euphemistically called a "scruple" in the King's mind. It is said that Wolsey had in view a marriage with a sister of the French King; Henry's thoughts, however, were running on Anne Boleyn. He consulted Sir Thomas More and told him to confer with the Bishops of Durham and Bath. At their next meeting More reported to the King as follows. I read from a life published in 1652:

> So Sir Thomas More departing, compared those places of Scripture with the expositions of divers of the old holy Doctors; and at his coming next to the Court in talking with his Majesty of the foresaid matter, he said, 'To be plain with your Grace, neither my Lord of Durham, nor my Lord of Bath (though I know them both to be wise, vertuous, learned and honourable Prelates) nor myself with the rest of your Councell (being all of us your Majesties own servants, so much bound unto your Highnesse for your great favours daily bestowed upon us) be, in my judgment, meet Councellors for your Grace herein; but if your Highness please to understand the very truth, you may have such Councellors devised, as neither for

respect of their own worldly profit, nor for fear of your princely authority will be inclined to deceive you': and then named S. Hierome, S. Austine, and divers other holy Doctors, both Greeks and Latines, and also shewed what authority he had gathered out of them; which although the King, as not agreeing with his desires, did not very well like of, yet were they by Sir Thomas More (who in all his communication with the King in that businesse, had alwayes most discreetly demeaned himself) so wisely tempered, that both at that present he took them in good, part and often afterwards had thereof conference with him again.

On the whole King Henry took this in good part.

The affair of the divorce ultimately brought about the downfall of Wolsey; and although More had in no way altered his attitude in regard to the divorce, King Henry selected him to succeed to the Chancellorship. He received the Great Seal on the 25th October 1529.

Had there been such a thing as a daily Press, the appointment would, I feel sure, have been described as a most interesting one. It was a new departure, an experiment, this appointment for the first time to the highest office in the land of one who was a lawyer and neither prelate nor nobleman. As the Duke of Norfolk said in his introductory oration, "It may perhaps seem to many a strange and an unusual matter that this dignity should be bestowed upon a layman, none of the nobility, and one that hath wife and children, because heretofore none but singular learned Prelates or men of Greatest Nobility have possessed the place." The appointment was a conspicuous success, not only by reason of More's learning as a lawyer, but also on the ground of More's admirable virtues, and matchless gift of wit and wisdom.

More made a most eloquent reply to the Duke of Norfolk. The scene was Westminster Hall—within sight of the judgment seat of the Chancery. More described his feelings at succeeding Wolsey, "to whom I may seem as a lighting of a candle when the Sun is down." He had, as he said, "cause enough by my predecessor's example to think honour but slippery . . . Wherefore I ascend this seat as a place full of labour and danger."

In truth he laboured much, and the danger was not found wanting.

His conduct and demeanour as Chancellor were in strong contrast to those of Wolsey. It was undoubtedly a corrupt age, and in many respects an indolent age, but no such vices as corruption or indolence could exist within the area of More's influence. The change in the administration of justice under the new régime was at once apparent.

Formerly gold was the passport by which access to the Chancellor was obtained. With More, the poorer the suppliant the more easily did he obtain audience. In the quaint and dubious language of his biographer—"the meaner the suppliant was . . . the more attentively he would hearken unto his cause, and with speedy trial dispatch him."

His custom was to hear and adjudicate upon causes in the morning, and in the afternoon to place himself at the disposal of petitioners for the purpose of examining their cases and giving redress where possible. Under the old régime writs had been issued without any examination whether any probable cause of action existed. This had led to vexatious litigation and heavy arrears of causes for adjudication. More changed all this. Before a suit could be commenced a bill had to be filed, signed by an attorney. After perusing the bill, the Chancellor, if he thought it a proper case, would grant his fiat for the commencement of the suit. That put an

end to the involving of innocent persons in vexatious litigation. The arrears of causes unheard were cleared off by unremitting attention to the discharge of his judicial duties, with the result that the lists actually ran dry.

Those were the days when equity was beginning to insist on softening the rigours of the Common Law; and it was often necessary for the Chancellor to issue injunctions to this end. More was firmly of opinion that law and equity might be beneficially administered by the same tribunal, anticipating in this respect the Judicature Act 1873. He endeavoured, accordingly, to induce the Common Law judges to relax the rigour of their rules. Failing in this, he had to grant injunctions. The judges, or some of them, complained; but More, summoning them to dine with him, convinced them of the propriety of his proceedings.

While it is not possible to describe More as a great chancellor from the lawyer's point of view, for his name is associated with no leading judgment or recorded display of legal reasoning, nevertheless, this may be truly said: that if to discharge judicial duties conscientiously, speedily and without favour, to make the machinery of justice work smoothly and efficiently, and to soften the rigours of the law so as to meet the rights of particular cases, are marks of a great chancellor, then Sir Thomas More must be so described.

His character was a wonderful blend of integrity and shrewdness; of innocence and wisdom.

His son-in-law, Mr. Dauncy, with mild humour complained that he could make no profit out of suitors by using his relationship to the Chancellor for their benefit. "My son"—said More—"this one thing I assure thee on my faith, that if the parties will at my hands call for justice, then were it my father, whom I love dearly, on one side and the Devil, whom I hate extremely, stood

on the other, his cause being Good, the Devil should have right." Another son-in-law, Mr. Heron, did actually have a cause in Chancery tried before him, and Sir Thomas More made what one biographer calls a "flat" decree against him. I hope that the word "flat" implies an order on the son-in-law to pay all the costs.

After he had ceased to be Chancellor there were charges brought against Sir Thomas More that he had accepted bribes from litigants. These were attempts to wreak vengeance on him for his unwavering attitude in regard to Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn. He was summoned before the Privy Council on three charges.

The first was in connection with a case of Vaughan v. Parnell. The defendant complained that More had made a decree against him, for which Vaughan's wife (her husband being laid up with the gout) presented the Chancellor with a gilt cup.

The account of the proceedings before the Privy Council is not without humour. Sir Thomas "presently confessed that for as much as that Cup was, long after the foresaid decree, brought him for a New Year's Gift, he upon her importunate pressing upon him, therefore of Courtesie refused not to receive it."—The account then continues:

> Then the Lord of Wiltshire (Queen Annes father and preferrer of this suite) (who hated Sir Thomas More, because he had not consented to his daughters marriage) with much joy said unto the Lords, 'Lo my Lords, did not I tell you that you should find the matter true?' Whereupon Sir Thomas desired their honours that as they had courteously heard him tell the one part of his tale, so they would vouchsafe of their honours indifferently to hear the other: which being granted, he further declared, that although he had indeed with much urging received that Cup, yet

immediately thereupon he caused his Butler to fill it with wine, and therein drank to her; and when she had pledged him. Then as freely as her husband had given it to him, even so freely gave he the same unto her again to give unto her husband for his New-years-gift: which at his instant request, though much against her will, yet at length she was fain to receive, as herself and certain others before them there presently deposed. Thus was the great mountain converted (scarse) to a little molehill.

The second charge was that a successful plaintiff, a Mistress Croaker, had presented him as a new year's gift with a pair of gloves containing forty pounds in golden angels. It transpired that More had dealt with the matter thus—by saying to her: "Mistresse, since it were against good manners to forsake a gentlewoman's New Years Gift I am content to take your gloves; but as for the lining I utterly refuse it.

The third case was that of a litigant, one Gresham, whose cause was pending, sending him for a new year's gift a gold cup. The style of the cup pleased the Chancellor, who kept it, and sent in exchange a cup said to be of greater value.

Sir Thomas More's integrity emerged unscathed from these charges; but I confess his conduct over the Gresham cup strikes me as injudicious, and I should have liked to have seen Mistress Croaker committed for contempt of court.

Of his shrewdness we find many examples. He measured up Henry VIII's character at an early stage, and with complete accuracy, when he said to Roper: "I believe he doth as singularly favour me, as any subject within this kingdom; yet . . . I have no cause to be proud of it, for if my head would win him a castle in France . . . it would not fail to go off." Truly a shrewd remark!

I like, too, his shrewdness in pursuing a policy of masterly inactivity as Speaker, when Cardinal Wolsey tried to overawe the House of Commons by appearing there in full state as Lord Chancellor. Wolsey's object was to get a large subsidy for the King; but his object was defeated. Listen to the account of the proceedings.

> Whereupon, the House wholly agreeing, he was received accordingly; where after he had in a solemn Oration, by many reasons, proved how necessary it was the demands there moved should be granted, and further, shewed that lesse would not serve the Kings turn; who seeing the House silent, answering nothing thereunto, and contrary to his expectation, shewing in themselves no inclination towards his request, he said unto them, 'Masters, you have many wise and learned men among you, and since I am the Kings own person sent hither unto you for the preservation of your selves, and all the Kingdome, I think it fit you give me some reasonable answer.' But when every man still held his peace, then he spake in particular to one Mr. Murrey, afterwards Lord Murrey, who making him no answer neither, he severally asked the same question of divers others accounted the wisest of the House: to whom when none of them all answered any thing, being before agreed as the custome was to make answer by their Speaker, 'Masters,' said the Cardinall, 'unlesse it be the manner of your House (as very likely it may) by your Speaker only in such cases to express your mindes, here is without doubt a marvellous obstinate silence': and thereupon he required answer of Mr. Speaker, who first reverently upon his knees excused the silence of the House, as abashed at the presence of so noble a personage; and after by many probable arguments proved, that for them to make answer, was neither

expedient nor agreeable with the ancient liberty of the House: in conclusion for himself he declared, that though they all had trusted him with their voices, yet except every of them could put their several wits into his head, he alone in so weighty a matter was not able to make his Grace sufficient answer. Whereupon the Cardinall displeased with Sir Thomas More, that had not in this Parliament in all things satisfied his desires, suddenly arose and departed; and afterwards in his Gallery at Whitehall in Westminster, uttered unto him all his grief, saying, 'Would to God Mr. More you had been at Rome, when I made you Speaker': 'Your Grace not offended, so would I too my Lord,' said Sir Thomas: and to put it out of the Cardinalls head, he began to talk of that Gallery of his, saying, I like this Gallery of yours, my Lord, better than your other at Hampton-Court. With which so wise digression, he broke off the Cardinalls displeasant talk, so that at that time he said no more to him.

Consider also the wisdom of his conduct when offered a large sum which had been subscribed for presentation to him. The occasion was this. Like some modern chancellors, he had engaged in literary labours outside the law—but, unlike modern chancellors, his literary labours had taken the form of learned writings in defence of his religion. The bishops, very properly, considered that, since in doing this work Sir Thomas More had really been discharging their duty, his efforts should not go unrecognised and unrewarded. A subscription was organised, to which bishops, abbots and the rest of the clergy contributed. It produced a sum of between four thousand and five thousand pounds. More, although a poor man, utterly declined to touch it.

When they for all their importune pressing upon him (that few would have supposed he could have refused it), could not for all that fasten any upon him: Then they desired him that they might bestow it upon his wife and children: 'Not so (My Lords)' said he, 'I had rather see it all cast into the Thames, than I or any of mine should have the worth of one penny of it. For though your offer my Lords be indeed very friendly and honourable, yet set I so much by my pleasure, and so little by my profit, that I would not in good faith for so much and much more, have lost the rest of so many nights sleep as was spent upon the same: and yet wish would I for all that, upon condition that all heresies were suppressed, that all my books were burned, and my labour utterly lost.' Thus departing, were they fain to restore unto every man his own again.

It is pleasing to think that the subscriptions were returned; but I doubt whether it would be profitable to speculate on the attitude of a twentieth century Lord Chancellor in similar circumstances.

Throughout More's Chancellorship the stumbling block of the divorce remained. Thomas Cromwell gradually secured the confidence of the King, and urged open and immediate rupture with Rome. The King was prepared to take this step if Pope Clement would not yield; but feared to take the step except as a last resort. For More the situation became perplexing and embarrassing; and when it became clear to him that although Rome would not sanction the divorce, Henry would none the less marry Anne Boleyn, he asked for and obtained leave to resign the Great Seal. He ceased to be Lord Chancellor on the 10th May 1532.

It was said of him, and truly said of him, that he had "behaved himself in his office of Chancellorship for

the space of two years and a half so wisely that none could mend his doings and so uprightly that none could take exception against him or his just proceedings."

With his resignation of the Great Seal his career as a lawyer ended; he retired into private life. He was, however, soon forced into publicity once more.

The King married Anne Boleyn on the 25th January 1533, and she was declared Queen the following Easter. More was bidden to her coronation; he declined. From that time onwards he was subjected to numerous attacks and charges, culminating in his conviction for treason on the false evidence of Rich, the King's attorney. He was convicted on the 1st July 1535 and was executed on the 6th July 1535. Thus he survived his Chancellorship little more than three years.

I have given you the barest outline of this great man's career; but I hope I have provided sufficient material to enable you to see him for the man he was. In any period of history he would shine out as a model of learning, wisdom, courtesy and saintliness—a combination rarely, if ever, met with before or since. In the times in which he lived he stands out with a radiance which blinds the eyes and dazzles the imagination.

I like his final speech to his judges. It gives one much pleasure, for it is a model of brevity, dignity and forgiveness. In case you do not recall it I will repeat it, and with its repetition conclude this scanty paper.

After the sentence of drawing, hanging and quartering had been pronounced he was told that his judges would listen to anything further which he wished to allege in his defence. This was his reply:

> I have nothing to say, my Lords, but that, like as the blessed Apostle St. Paul, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, was present and consented to the death of St. Stephen, and kept their clothes that stoned him

to death, and yet be they now both twain holy Saints in Heaven, and shall continue there friends for ever; so I verily trust and shall therefore right heartily pray, that, though your Lordships have been now judges on earth to my condemnation, we may yet hereafter all meet together in Heaven, merrily, to our everlasting salvation; and so I pray God preserve you all, and especially my Sovereign Lord the King, and send him faithful counsellors.

A CATHOLIC OF THE RENAISSANCE

BY

HENRY BROWNE, S.J.

A CATHOLIC OF THE RENAISSANCE

NATURALLY our first thought of Blessed Thomas More envisages him as a champion of the Faith who died fighting. Far be it from us to forget that he was a martyr, nor shall we let Englishmen forget it, even if they wished to, but, then, they don't. However, I will ask you for a brief space to abstract from your minds everything about his last end, to suppose that he died as he lived most of his life—a life of peace and quiet. Not as though his death were of no great account. If More had not died as well or even better than he lived, his countrymen would never have admired and loved him as they do. It was necessary for him to die—not merely to become a beacon-light in a dark age, viewed religiously—but to enable the student of human psychology to estimate him at his real worth. An Englishman he fully was, fully sturdy of fibre, but his portrait as such did require that finishing touch to make it all right. Yes, let him die, die for his own reputation as well as for the cause of the Crucified One.

But for the argument of this paper it is necessary, I repeat, to think of More's career under one particular aspect, and that only. We are going to view him as a Type rather than merely as a Personality. Let me explain. In every sense More was a great outstanding figure of his age. His genius was many-sided; we might discuss him as a statesman, a patron of art, a scholar, a humorist, or a divine. But we shall not. Personality includes everything. It is perhaps rare to find in our annals a genius so various as that of More. But why

should not genius be many-sided? Surely Shakespeare had many sides; so, in a different way, had Leonardo—nor could we say less of some of the great ones of older days ; for instance, a Pericles, or even a Julius Caesar.

But all the same, I want to describe our hero, not as a man of many brilliant gifts, still less as one who has earned our religious veneration. These things are necessarily rare. Martyrdom, anyhow among civilized men, is fortunately something out of the common. We shall fix our thoughts upon what is common, view More as one of the people—his own people. We shall not fall into the error of thinking of him as common-place—still less of calling him vulgar. By the way what is the real meaning of this very opprobrious term? One often asks oneself what on earth it means; and perhaps it will be necessary to go to the next world before the difficulty is solved. But by a "common" man we just mean a member of our common humanity—that element which we all share with the elusive person who is known —God knows why—as the "man in the street." He is certainly not always in the street, even though he frequently turns up there, and even loafs about in it. We cannot always be sure that we know much about him, but we do know that he has in him a touch of human nature, and that is just now our quest. The man in the street does not necessarily combine sturdiness with intellectuality; still less high intelligence with entrancing sweetness. But no matter how high the type may be, a man must be a type of Something. If he be an embodiment of all that is best in his fellow-men, I venture to think that he is all the more for that a type of them. If More were a good man, a good Englishman, and a good Catholic, he was a good type, but still a type.

That Sir Thomas More was a representative of the English Renaissance cannot be questioned. His relations with Erasmus, Holbein, Colet, and Tunstall are proof

enough of that. But that is not all. I should like to quote a passage on this subject from the pen of Professor R. W. Chambers, who is, if anyone, qualified to give an opinion. He wrote:*

"More makes a link between two ages. We think of him rightly as our first great modern; or as the first great English vernacular historian, or as the first and greatest of an illustrious line of writers of Utopias; or as the greatest member of our first group of modern scholars, a man skilled in calling bad names in good Latin; and Dr. Reed has shown us how we have to look to him and his circle for the beginnings of the Tudor drama. But More was also the last great man who had lived the whole of his life with the England of the Middle Ages as yet undestroyed around him; a land of great libraries, which had been accumulating since Anglo-Saxon times, of ancient religious houses, where the walls were covered with paintings and the windows shone with the glorious English glass of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; a land of schools more plentiful than ever they were again till almost our own day. More is the product of those late Middle Ages of which Dante is the supreme figure."

Still, for all the complexities of More's position and character, we feel justified in considering him chiefly in relation to the Renaissance, and particularly upon its religious side. Although this was by no means primarily a religious movement, its influence in that matter was supremely great. In philosophy, in letters, in art, in science, at every turn the humanists came up against religious doctrine or religious sentiment as existing in the then established order of things. The Renaissance was not, indeed, a frontal attack upon Catholicism—that was reserved for Luther and Calvin, who had very little in common with the humanists. But it is perfectly

* Brit. Acad. Lecture, *Saga and Myth of Sir Thomas More*, 1927, page 44.

obvious that the methods and ideals of the new age were constantly tending to eat the heart out of Catholicism. It is a mere truism to say that the Reformation was heralded by the Renaissance as the sunrise by the dawn—though we are at liberty to put it the other way, and say, as darkness is by the evening twilight.

It is my thesis that if More was a type of the Renaissance in this country, we must admit in all fairness that he was also truly and fully a type of the religious spirit of his age. I do not think that as a rule we Catholics are prone to under-estimate the evils of the pre-Reformation period. No doubt, if this was a proper place for controversy, much could be written in the way of arguments for or against any particular view of the subject. But that would not be fitting, nor is it our object. We are trying to realize the character of one of our Lord Chancellors and to find out where he stands as a historical personage. When calling More a type of the pre-Reformation period in England, we do not mean to assert that there was no other, and perhaps a more obvious type. Anyone asked to indicate the Catholic statesman who best represented the period would naturally name More's predecessor, the Cardinal of York. There was nothing mean or strikingly dishonest about Thomas Wolsey, even though he was a butcher's son elevated to the purple. He was, of course, ambitious, successful, magnificent, and probably, according to his lights, he was a religious man. No doubt he often sacrificed principle to policy—but then he was frankly a politician, as well as an archbishop. And that about defines our idea of what a Renaissance Catholic Churchman was likely to prove himself. And Wolsey was, besides, in his day a great outstanding figure in the history of Europe. Was he then really a type? Well, in London alone, not then so big a place as we know it, while Wolsey was reigning in his palace at Whitehall—

a palace so grand that King Henry thought it better to relieve him of the burden and to occupy it himself—the Bishop of Winchester was holding court in his own palace close to London Bridge, where some remnants of its style can still be viewed by the curious; His Lordship of Ely was just off Holborn, where part of his mansion is now doing duty as a Catholic parish church; and we need not remind you of Canterbury at Lambeth, and of London at Fulham. So that if you sauntered out of an afternoon you would be likely to meet, perhaps, more than one of these comfortable Churchmen sitting in a gorgeous equipage and surrounded by a body of highly-liveried retainers. And if Parliament were sitting, there would be the abbatial processions hardly inferior to those of episcopal or archiepiscopal rank.

We must not labour this point; we may take it for granted that, in spite of all this outward show—need we say because of it?—real religion was at a low ebb. At least if we are going to consider the official state of the Catholic Church, we need not hesitate to admit that the priests and prelates—nay, even the supreme authorities—were infected with negligence, with worldliness, often with corruption, and sometimes (though somewhat rarely) with irreligion. The cry for Reform during More's period was perfectly sincere, and even the extreme Reformers in the conventional sense may have brought themselves to believe that the changes they advocated were necessary if the utter decay of Christian faith and morality was to be forestalled. Statements on this topic are always liable to be challenged, especially if put forth in a spirit of controversy, which we desire to avoid. In his lecture, which preceded this, Mr. Belloc painted the period in lurid colours, and no one would suspect him of a leaning towards unorthodoxy. But in truth, even if half of what he said be admitted, a very serious consideration

arises for us who, as Catholics, are desirous of undoing the work of the Reformation taken in the large sense. How are we to deal with the objection that the revolution in the religion of this country, however much we may regard it as an evil, was yet a necessary evil? It will be observed that we are not treating this on theological grounds, but purely as a matter of history.

What we have to discuss is this. How far did the evils which undoubtedly existed in More's experience justify his contemporaries and successors in deciding that religion in England had gone rotten? Our reply is a concrete one. More himself proves the contrary. It does not follow that a peach or an apple is sound at the core because its outward appearance is good. And, conversely, in moral or spiritual things it does not follow that a Church is rotten at the core because it has a bad look about it.

But we have here to consider a very obvious difficulty. "One swallow," it is often said, "does not make a summer," and are we justified in assuming that one man may redeem a whole generation? Well, not if he stands alone; and the whole point of this paper is to suggest that it is at least improbable that More stood alone. That is why I asked you to regard him less as a Lord Chancellor than as a lump of the common clay of humanity. He was that, and why should the evidence which he supplies not be taken as typical of an element of soundness in his environment?

I asked you to abstract from all that is brilliant in his personality and exceptional in his career. If he had died here at Chelsea as he lived with his family, his books and his devotions, what would history have recorded of him? That he was in many ways a great man, certainly a good man, certainly a lovable character, the best product of his generation—in a word, a notable scholar and statesman, who was also a sincere and pious Catho-

lic. And that expresses nearly enough what we mean by a type of an English Catholic of the Renaissance.

I hope that if I try to illustrate my point a little further I shall not seem to hammer at the obvious, for it seems to me that the matter is of first-class importance for our judgments about the sixteenth century. If we can establish the point that More was not merely a sort of belated medievalist, but a man of his own age in religion (as he certainly was in humanism), it appears that no more crucial conclusion about him can be reached.

Let us then consider a somewhat parallel case. I refer to another English chancellor who preceded More by something over a century. Modern Englishmen think of William Wykeham as the founder of our Public School system, of which we are justly proud, whatever its unkind critics may say about it. In this respect Wykeham is an outstanding figure in our national annals, and the monuments in stone which he left after him bespeak a man of no ordinary parts. Yet no historian of the late fourteenth century, if looking out for a type of this difficult period, would hesitate to name Wykeham. He stands, and rightly, for his class. That does not mean that he sums up the whole of his contemporaries, but that his name must on no account be omitted from the roll. And that is how we regard his greater successor in the highest office of the State.

Or to go farther afield at a time nearer to that of More. The world was startled this summer by the extraordinary homage paid by France to a lately canonized saint. At the fifth centenary of the Maid, the highest authorities in a state hitherto notoriously anti-Catholic vied with those of the Catholic religion in acclaiming St. Joan as the saviour of France. It has, indeed, been said, reasonably enough, that in the world's history we find nothing exactly parallel to the

romance of Joan of Arc. Therefore it becomes difficult for us now to think of her as a youthful peasant of the Marne country. Yet that is what she was. We must force our imagination to forget her voices and her mission if we would properly grasp her essential character. Under other circumstances the woman would have remained in her natural obscurity, she would certainly not have been revealed to the world as a man of arms and probably not as a canonized saint. What would remain? A strong character, like More—a witty one—a good, very good, girl, above all an honour to her kith and kin. In such a light it would be fair to take her for a type of French peasant of a time later than Wykeham and earlier than More. Circumstances took the Maid out of her rut, but the rut was there all the time.

And so we may glance at the rut from which our martyr was lifted. He did not confine himself to England, but the best that England could give him, that he had. He knew Cheapside, the Charterhouse, Oxford, Lincoln's Inn. And then he came to Chelsea, where we are met to-day to celebrate his memory. There are few historical characters, with the single exception of the Maid of Orleans, of whose home life we have such authentic and detailed pictures as Erasmus and Roper have given us of the life at Chelsea. What a happy simple life it was, with the homely wife, the more imaginative daughter, the father, the children and the children's children! And the atmosphere breathed was that of Christian faith and piety, constant study interspersed with prayer and even (whisper it gently) with a severe disciplining of the body. They have said More was hard on heretics. There was an incipient one for a short time in the family circle—but More cured him, not by severity, not even by argument, but by patience and intercession with God.

And are we to persuade ourselves that all this was

exceptional, abnormal, the result of a somewhat highly-strung temperament? Rather we may well believe that through the length and breadth of the land, perhaps in a humbler way even in Chelsea, many similar good Catholic households were saying their prayers, getting their children baptized, loving their Faith, dying in peace and spiritual comfort, being put to rest with their fathers, and looking forward to the resurrection of the Just.

More, gifted with insight and foresight, must have known that a tempest was brewing, but the majority of his contemporaries probably thought lightly of religious strife. Christianity to them was something personal and national, and was very much taken for granted. From the generation we have been discussing were descended those generations of English Catholics who inherited the faith of More and his contemporaries. Catholic life during the succeeding centuries as it has been so graphically described in a page of Newman's sermon* is something that we modern Catholics find it hard to realize, but of which we always think with reverence and almost with awe. Hiding away from the sight of their fellows, misunderstood, calumniated, detested, they held on to their faith with a tenacity which only increased as the bitterness deepened. This very year we have been recalling the event of their legal emancipation, which lessened, though it did not at once end, their long-drawn crucifixion. Their memory must be always held in benediction, and while we enter wistfully into their inheritance, surely it behoves us to ask from what sort of forbears they themselves derived the tradition which they handed on to ourselves?

If the home life of Sir Thomas More is really allowed to throw light on this question, we shall be loath to

* *The Second Spring*, Oscott, 1852.

admit that the Christianity of his day, whatever were its failings, had gone bad and was irretrievably decayed.

And thus we may here re-echo, however weakly, the statement made in his address by G. K. Chesterton that at no time since his martyrdom has Sir Thomas More been more important than at the present moment, but that as the ages roll on this importance will become more and more apparent. We are accustomed to Mr. Chesterton's sudden flashes of spiritual intuition, yet we wonder if he ever delivered a more inspired utterance than this. As a prophecy it seems to include two things as to the influence, present and future, of More upon the English mind. Firstly, our countrymen are learning, mainly through the appreciation of non-Catholics like Professor R. W. Chambers, to understand the greatness and the attractiveness of More, as representing our own distinctive type of character. So long as Englishmen were blinded by virulent prejudice against Rome and her adherents, they could hardly be just to More. But as a saner view of Catholicism becomes more prevalent, as men's characters are judged by a fairer standard than the *odium theologicum* supplies, More will be placed in his own proper niche in the history of England and in the hearts of Englishmen.

And now we go a step further. More must come to be regarded not merely as a Catholic, but as a representative Catholic. The new England must learn that More's virtue and outstanding greatness proceeded from a common faith, which was so ingrained in him as to be the real, though sometimes hidden, source of his whole activity, secular as well as religious. We have ourselves spoken of his martyrdom as though it were something accidental in his career. And so it may well appear to our eyes. But in the whole scheme of things there is no accident. It is never an accident when "one man must die for the people."

THE GLORY OF CHELSEA

BY

REGINALD BLUNT

THE GLORY OF CHELSEA

During this week you have had a series of interesting and brilliant discourses on More, which have dealt with his work and life from various points of view, such as More as a statesman, More as a judge and a lawyer, More as a great humanist, More as a master of English prose, More as a humorist, and of course, More as the great English martyr. I am only here on one possible pretext. I, a wandering sheep, not of this fold, have no business on this platform except from one point of view, and that is my love of Chelsea, and my immense interest in all the worthies of Chelsea, and primarily in Sir Thomas More, the greatest and best of Chelsea's worthies. That being so, I have approached More from an entirely different standpoint. As a boy, when my mother was inculcating the love of Chelsea upon me, More was an interesting country gentleman who built a house where Beaufort Street now is—a gentleman farmer. From that angle I began my approach to More, and it is from that angle I should like, if I may, to speak to you for a few minutes.

I do not know exactly when More came to Chelsea. The date is generally said to have been about 1520, but it seems to me More must have known Chelsea before that date, because, if the second part of "Utopia" was written, as I believe it was, in 1515, there is a passage there which seems to me so excatly to describe Chelsea that I think there is no doubt More must have had a real knowledge of the place at that time; before he came actually to reside here. I will just read the passage—this

is describing the country and city of the Utopians: "Forty miles beyond the city it falleth into the ocean sea." That is the river. "By all that space that lieth between the sea and the city, and certain miles also above the city, the water ebbeth and floweth six hours together with a swift tide. When the sea floweth in for the length of thirty miles it filleth all the Anyder with salt water and driveth back the fresh water of the river. And somewhat further on changeth the sweetness of the fresh water with saltness. But a little beyond that the river waxeth sweet and runneth forby the city fresh and pleasant. And when the sea ebbeth and goeth back again the fresh water followeth it almost even to the very fall into the sea." That is an exact description of the ebb and flow of the Chelsea river above the city, and I feel certain myself that More must have often walked up here by the banks of the river to Chelsea before his house was actually built. What was More like ? Carlyle, when he was writing the history of Frederick the Great, had a paper screen in front of him on which were pasted the most authentic portraits that he could get of the people with whom he was dealing—Frederick the Great, his generals, his friends and the great characters of the day.

It struck me that a pen-picture of More might help in what we have to hear to-day. It has been very well collected, I think, in this book of Hutton's: "He was of middle height and well proportioned figure, save that through his habit of much writing his right shoulder became higher than his left. His limbs were well formed, but his hands were a little clumsy—the pictures generally conceal them. His colour was pale, heightened by a faint bloom, his hair dark brown. His eyes were grey and speckled, 'which,' says Erasmus, 'as a mark of genius are much admired in England.' His expression, as can well be understood from Holbein's

masterly representation, was keen and inquiring, but entirely gentle and kind. His voice was neither boisterous nor big, nor yet too small and shrill; he spake his words very distinctly, without any manner of hastiness or stuttering; albeit he delighted in all kinds of melody, he seemed not of his own nature to be apt to sing himself' He was intensely humorous. Yet, 'Whatsoever jest he brought forth he never laughed at any himself, but spake always so sadly that few could see by his look whether he spake in earnest or in jest.' He was careless, as men of quick humour often are, about his attire. He wore his gown awry, a habit which Ascham tells us was imitated by succeeding barristers. He wore no silk or purple or chains of gold except when he could not avoid it. He left the direction of his wardrobe entirely in the hands of one of his servants whom he would call his 'tutor.' He cared as little about his food as about his dress. He rarely ate of more than one dish, though in the time of his wealth his table was always well provided, and he preferred vegetables, milk or eggs. He generally drank water, sometimes, to please others, very small beer, and when it was necessary to drink a guest's health, a little wine. He was never a strong man, but was able to go through his work well enough until a short time before his imprisonment." That, of course, is a collation from various sources, but I think it gives one an interesting picture of the man.

The house he built here in Chelsea—you see it in Kip's plan which is on view, and in a drawing which is evolved from the plan there. Its situation—on the very spot where we now are—has been charmingly pictured by more than one of More's guests, who have told us of the interlacing foliage of the garden, and of the beautiful outlook to the Surrey hills, across the silver strand of the great salmon river that flowed by its southern wall. It was not at all a magnificent house,

but must have been spacious, roomy and comfortable; and there More lived a life of wonderful diversity, extreme sociability, and with a house ever hospitably open to visitors of all kinds. Yet he combined with that a determination not to be beset by people, and to do his work and his prayers apart from all that sociality involved; and for that purpose he found it necessary to build a second lodging just east of this room—where there was a chapel and a gallery and a study—and there he used to go at night, and for the whole of Friday, and often spent there many hours for solitary study, and prayer, and penance. He was a very neighbourly man, and Chelsea must have been the richer and better for his coming. "Not only did he invite his poor neighbours to his table, and hire a house at Chelsea for us as a hospital, where he maintained many aged, sick and indigent people at his own cost, but he would give privately among the poor and aid them by advice and liberal alms and not by the penny or halfpenny, but sometimes five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty shillings, according to everyone's necessity." He was a passionate lover of animals; he had pets of all sorts. We know of the ape, the fox, the weasel, and the rabbits, and there were many other pets which he kept in his garden, of which pleasant stories are told. He hated the destruction of animals, he abhorred hunting in all its forms, and I think you remember in Utopia he says that such a thing as the pursuit of beasts was relegated to their butchers and their bondsmen.

His other passionate love, and I am speaking of course only of his social life, was music. He sang a little himself, and had sufficient voice to join in the choir of the church regularly. He used to sing with his first wife, to whom he was tenderly devoted, and he had her taught more than one instrument; his second wife, too, he tried hard to persuade to be musical. I believe it was

a very uphill job. Lady More was stout and short-winded, and extremely irritable, and we can picture what More's teaching her the flute must have been! However, he did his best. His life in Chelsea has been so often described that I must not attempt to go into that. It would take too much time. His love for his family was a strong feature of it. There was the delicate bookish son, John, the three daughters, Margaret, Elizabeth and Cecilia, and their husbands and children, and Margaret Giggs, and a curious collection of other people, who either temporarily or for long periods lived in the house. He was devoted to his children, and particularly to the eldest, Margaret, who must have been of a wonderfully lovable and delightful character. I must read that passage where Margaret's illness almost struck him down: "Margaret Roper, whom he loved most of all his children, was stricken with the fearful plague, and 'so that both physicians and all others despaired of her recovery. More, as he that most entirely tended her, being in no small heaviness for her, by prayer at God His hands sought to get remedy, whereupon after his usual manner going up into his new lodging, there in his chapel upon his knees most devoutly besought Almighty God that it should like His goodness, unto whom nothing was impossible, if it were His blessed will to vouchsafe graciously to him his petition." And, as they believed, his prayer was heard, and she was "miraculously recovered, whom if it had pleased God at that time to take to His mercy, her father said he would never have meddled with worldly matters after." And you remember that marvellous description of Roper's of one of the last meetings between More and his daughter, when she broke through the crowd of pikemen when he was being taken to the Tower, the soldiers unwilling to restrain or repel her, and threw her arms round her father's neck and kissed him again and again. "The

behouldenge whereof was to many of them that were present thereat soe lamentable that it made them for very sorrow to mourne and weepe." To me it is one of the most touching passages in all family history. Though More was of all men happy in friendship, I have shown how he insisted on retirement and solitude. A remark of his that I always like is: "We may not look at our pleasure to go to Heaven in feather beds. It is not the way." His sons-in-law were doubtless trying at times. Roper was, I believe, a bit of a heretic, and had tremendous arguments with his father-in-law. The other two seemed to think that, because they had married his daughters, they were to have preferential, if not unfair, treatment in any case of theirs which might happen to come before him, which shows very little knowledge of More. They were promptly suppressed in that direction; yet he was devoted to them, and the home life must have been charming and delightful. There were other people in the household. One was the steward: very characteristically it is said of More that he thought so much of his steward that in his greatest affairs he consulted him. The other was the fool. You remember in Utopia how gladly they suffered the fools, and More had this man Pattison, who must have been a very quaint and amusing character. There is an interesting passage in Utopia which illustrates his position: "They have singular delight and pleasure in fools, and as it is a great reproach to do any of them hurt or injury, so they prohibit not to take pleasure of foolishness; for that, they think, doth much good to the fools. And if any man be so sad and stern that he cannot laugh neither at their words nor at their deeds, none of them be committed to his tuition; for fear lest he should not entreat them gently and favorably."

There is an anecdote of Pattison preserved by Ellis Heywood. It shows that he was one of those jesters who

owed their position as much to infirmity as wit. "One day he was standing by the table when More was dining, and, noticing that one of the guests had a remarkably large nose, after he had gazed upon it for some time, suddenly exclaimed: 'What a terrific nose that gentleman has!' When all pretended not to hear him Pattison saw that he had made a mistake, and tried to set himself right by saying, 'How I lied in my throat when I said that that gentleman's nose was so monstrously large. On the faith of a gentleman it is in reality rather a small one.' On this the company with difficulty restrained their laughter, and More made signs that the fool should be turned out of the room. But Pattison, who had a great opinion of his own powers of bringing everything to a happy conclusion, determined to recover his credit by a great effort, placed himself in More's seat at the head of the table and called out, 'There is one thing I would have you know; that gentleman has not the least atom of a nose.' "

I must stop, though one might go on at much greater length. I will end at the thought I began with, and that is my early picture of More as a farmer. He had no doubt a good bit of land here. It is believed that what is now Lindsey House was part of the farm buildings, and Mr. Lawrence, who lives at Lindsey House, told me the other day that when substantial repairs were done there lately the oak work revealed in the house was pronounced by architects to be much earlier than the existing house and unquestionably Tudor. It was in all probability part of the oak work of More's farm buildings.

One sees from his Utopia that More was a very keen farmer, far ahead of his time. Here, for example, is an instance I came upon in Utopia: "They bring up a great multitude of poultry, and that by a marvellous policy; for the hens do not sit upon the eggs: but by

keeping them in a certain equal heat they bring life into them and hatch them. The chickens as soon as they be come out of the shell follow men and women instead of the hens." There we have More forecasting the incubator. The farm in Chelsea he enjoyed greatly, and there are references which show how interested he was in the work.

There is one passage about the farm which I should like to read in conclusion. It concerns the catastrophe that happened when he was away, and fire broke out, and a large part of the farm buildings was burned. It was on the occasion of his return from the second embassy to the Netherlands, in 1529. He had not been able to come home to his family, but was obliged to go straight to court, where he learned that a severe misfortune had happened to his household at Chelsea, and thereupon wrote to his wife the most simple and beautiful, perhaps, of all his letters: "Mistress Alice,—In my most hearty wise I recommend me to you. And whereas I am informed by my son Heron of the loss of our barns and of our neighbour's also, with all the corn that was therein; and albeit saving of God's pleasure it is a greaty pity of so much good corn lost, yet, as it hath liked Him to send us such a chance, we must and are bounden not only to be content but also to be glad of this visitation. He sent us all we have lost; and since He hath by such a chance taken it away again, His pleasure be fulfilled. Let us never grudge thereat, but take it in good worth, and heartily thank Him for adversity as for prosperity. And peradventure we have more cause to thank Him for our loss than for our winning, for His wisdom better seeth what is good for us than we do ourselves. Therefore I pray you be of good cheer, and take all the household with you to church, and there thank God both for what He hath given us and for that which He hath taken from

us, and for that which He hath left us, which, if it please Him, He can increase when He will; and if it please Him to give us yet less, as His pleasure be it. I pray you make good onsearch what my poor neighbours have lost, and bid them take no thought therefor; for if I shall not have myself a spoon, there shall be no poor neighbours of mine bear loss that by any chance happened in my house. I pray you be with my children and your household merry in God, and devise somewhat with your friends what we were best to take for provision to be made for corn for our household, and for seed this year coming, if we think it good that we keep the land still in our hands. And whether we think it good that we shall do so or not, yet I think it were not best suddenly thus to give it all up, and to put away our folk from our farm till we have somewhat advised us thereon. Howbeit if we have more now than we shall need, and which can get them other masters, ye may then discharge us of them; but I would not that any man were suddenly sent away he wot not whither." That, I think, is a farmer's letter of a type most beautiful and very rare, with which this little sketch may fitly end.

A NATIONAL BULWARK AGAINST TYRANNY

BY

BEDE JARRETT, O.P.

A NATIONAL BULWARK AGAINST TYRANNY

In speaking about Blessed Thomas More, I do not know to what extent I am encroaching on what has already been put in front of you on previous occasions, but I would like to try to put in front of you, as far as I can, what was the purpose of the King in putting Sir Thomas More to death. Undoubtedly the purpose in the mind of the King was to destroy the opposition, and I would ask you first of all to realise that he entirely succeeded; that with the death of More and Fisher, as far as the reign of Henry the Eighth was concerned, the business was over, that is to say, the opposition to the King. The second thing to notice is this, that Sir Thomas More's position in England, which was strangely prominent, was not in any sense due to any power derived from politics. It is true that he was Chancellor, and the Lord Chancellor had a certain position in government, but really no great position; not anything like, for example, the position that the modern Lord Chancellor has in the political life of the country. As Chancellor, he was nothing like that. Blessed Thomas More was indeed employed on various embassies. He accompanied the King to the Field of the Cloth of Gold (1520) and as plenipotentiary signed the treaty of Cambray (1529). He also did a certain amount of work in the Houses of Parliament, but he had no personal interest in political life. Nor had he really very much opportunity for taking part in it. It was not, then, from his political position that the King was afraid of him and was determined to get him out of the way.

Indeed, it is a curious commentary on the public opinion of England that the two people that the King wanted to get out of the road were actually the two most learned people in England at the time. It is unquestioned that Blessed Thomas More and Blessed John Fisher were certainly the most learned men actually living at the time in England. Out of all that rather wonderful band, including Colet, Grocyn, Linacre and Lilly, Thomas More and Fisher alone survived. Consequently you have to realise that the position of More and the position of Fisher in regard to English public opinion was in neither case merely an official position, the one as Bishop and the other as Lord Chancellor; it was in both cases won by their own personal character and (since we are dealing with the period of the Renaissance) by their own personal learning. You no doubt have heard from what has already been told you in earlier lectures that Blessed Thomas More was great as a lawyer, great as a wit, and great as a scholar; and it was, I suppose, really his scholarship that made the King anxious to be rid of him. Again, in appraising the state of European public feeling towards the threatened changes in religion you have to realise that in the ordinary letters, the familiar literature, the diaries at the time, the Reformers were looked upon very much as we in our generation look upon the Bolsheviks. Later on a less unflattering description would have to be made of them, but at that particular period, owing entirely to their destructive tendencies (they destroyed everywhere the age-long expressions of venerable faith and culture), the comment on them from the side of those who religiously agreed with them as well as of those who religiously opposed them is that the Reformers were everywhere known as destroyers. The Catholic naturally was looked upon, sometimes to his discredit, sometimes to his credit, as standing for venerable tradition. Consequently you

will find in the writings of the time and indeed for a century after in polite literature (in French literature, for example, some of which was Catholic while some was not), that the destruction of the sacred things of Europe—the shrines, the books, the glass, the buildings—by the Protestants gave a shock to the public opinion of the cultured world. Remember we are discussing the opinions of men not living in the age of to-day, but the age of the Renaissance, in which the leaders of public opinion were entirely in favour of culture. It is, we must repeat again, precisely to culture that Blessed Thomas More owed his prominence.

Now, further, the position in England was extraordinary from the point of view of the Renaissance. England was the one country in Europe in which the leaders of the Renaissance were all devout Catholics. In Florence, for instance, you had a man like Ficino, or again, an artist like Perugino, neither of whom was really a believer either in Christianity or even, perhaps, in the existence of a personal God. They would have followed vaguely some dreams of Plato, but minus a great deal of even what Plato considered reasonably clear in philosophy. In England, on the other hand, the whole of the Renaissance was entirely Catholic. You had men like Colet, Grocyn, Lilly and Linacre (the last a great name all over Europe. He was brought up largely by Lorenzo de Medici, founded here the Royal College of Medicine, and became towards the end of his life a priest) all of them admirable Catholics. In England alone of the nations then existing, the whole cultural movement was entirely devotional; that is, was directed by men who were all personally devout. Erasmus, when he came to England, was impressed by the piety, not merely of the people, but of the scholars; and reading Erasmus's letters, as they have now been re-arranged, so that they are set in true chronological

order, you can quite easily for yourself watch the influence on Erasmus of this English cultural life. When one of his own young religious wrote to Erasmus to say that he was anxious to throw off his habit and go back to the world, Erasmus wrote back to him a letter in which his heart is clearly seen, in which he implored him to do nothing of the kind. Erasmus knew his world, and writes to this young man: "Believe me, if you knew more of these things, you would be less weary of your present life." Again, both Erasmus himself and Sir Thomas More in the earlier period of their lives, before Luther had come on the scene, spoke very strongly and vigorously in their criticism of Catholic things. In the "Utopia" More is careful to tell you that the Gospel has never been preached in Utopia, and therefore you must not expect to find Christianity in Utopia, and, again in the famous book partly by Erasmus and partly by More "The Praise of Folie"—their pun on the Greek of More's own name—you get a series of criticisms of the abuses of the Catholic system. But as soon as Luther had begun his declarations against the Roman faith More and Erasmus gave up their criticism. What was possible for a man to do in a society that was completely Catholic was no longer possible, and became almost an act of disloyalty when that society now included some who were bitterly hostile to the whole Catholic scheme. So that you get, for instance, Blessed Thomas More saying at the end of his life that had he known what was going to happen he would never have written even what he did. He and Erasmus (he calls him in that famous answer to Tyndale so sumptuously published by Eyre and Spottiswood, "Erasmus my darling") would have done very different: "I would not only my darling's books but my own also, help to burn them both with my own hands rather than folk should (though through their own fault) take any harm of them, seeing that I see

them likely in these days so to do." That is the atmosphere of More, and that is the atmosphere that Erasmus himself is coming into. Erasmus writes himself later on and says: "I see a race of men arising whom my soul loathes," and then he proceeds to describe the result of the action of the Lutherans in Germany.

The position, therefore, as far as England is concerned, is a position in which the cultural leaders of English society are Catholic and are distressed at what is going on abroad. It is the very high point of the Renaissance, with its passionate love of culture, and Blessed Thomas More takes his place in that circle, in that movement, in that stream. Himself one of the most learned men of Europe, his learning was just one side of him that shared to the full the Renaissance spirit. His love of gardening again, to which your attention has been previously called, is a love which is common to all the Renaissance princes. His love of strange "birds and beasts," of which, as you have already heard, he made a collection, is another way in which he is at one with the Renaissance. So, too, again is his love of music, shown in the musical instruments Holbein intended to put into his picture of the family: "Here put a clavichord and other instruments on a shelf." Erasmus, indeed, says he could not sing, while Cresacre More says he sang in the parish choir. These statements are not incompatible. The witticism is not mine but Henri Bremond's. More was a man exactly of his time. Indeed, he was the chief man of England at that particular moment. He was the leader of the young men of the University. His own dreams were always of Oxford: "We shall be merry together, like poor Oxford scholars." His followers were young men of fashion in England. He was really the head of the whole cultural society then existing in England, and for that very reason the King was determined to get him out of the way. His own tastes, as you

have heard, were very simple. He had a passion for brown bread. That is the sort of person he was. He loved corned beef and milk puddings—Erasmus adds that he was particularly fond of eggs and fruit and, much to the horror, I am quite sure, of Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton, that water was his drink. Most famous almost in England was he as a great wit. Wits have always been rare in England. Remember how vulnerable the King was to pointed witticisms, and again you will understand even better what made the King afraid. But the young More was so witty that he found himself disadvantaged by it. The King would always have him at Court. Without moving a muscle of his face, in perfect gravity, he could go on with his witticisms hour after hour. Bored perhaps because of his domestic troubles, the King used to make More come to the Court night after night. Eventually More deliberately "dissembled his nature" and "disused himself from his former mirth" in order, like so many of you, to continue to reside in Chelsea. But the King followed him to his Chelsea garden and "walked with him" with his arm round More's neck. Though he loved him, More never really was quite sure of him: "If my head would win him a castle in France, it should not fail to go." King Henry as Prince of Wales had been the most popular man in the country, great at almost everything he did or at any rate accomplished in all. His music is still sung, his poetry is still readable. As to his learning, no doubt his theological writings were helped out by others, but his knowledge of theology was considerable for a King. He was a great athlete. It is one of the things that the Venetian ambassador mentions, that the young men of England used to come and watch him play tennis, first because he played so well, and secondly because he had such beautiful skin and was very careful to wear shirts that showed the skin through. Very briefly, then, to

leave out a great deal of unnecessary repetition of what you must already have heard, we would repeat that More was looked up to by that circle as being the leader of public opinion in England, or a man who could quite easily have made himself the centre. He was exactly that type.

For myself, I do not think More was quite so great in public estimation as when he came to die. I think, up till that moment he had capacity for greatness, he had an opportunity for greatness, but he had not a character that desired or ambitioned greatness. Indeed, every possible opportunity that was given him for coming forward he persistently refused. Then came one particular moment when he seemed about to be forced into prominence. To this his whole argument was "I am quite willing to be silent. Ask me no question. I will never raise a finger against the King. But if you ask me questions I must answer."

Remember, further, his life was from 1478 to 1535. Remember the Papacy he lived under. He lived under the worst of the Renaissance Popes; Alexander VI ruled and died within More's lifetime. That is to say, the Papacy he knew was not the Papacy that you and I know and reverence—great, purified, outstanding spiritual. That is the marvel of his faith. That is where so much of his exquisite discernment shews up against his time when the rest of the world went astray. He died for a Papacy that, as far as men could see, was little else than a small Italian princedom ruled by some of the least reputable of the Renaissance princes. Now, More says himself that as a younger man he had believed in the authority of General Councils as against the authority of the Pope: "I was myself, sometime not of the mind that the primacy of that See should be begun by the institution of God." But owing to the definition of the Papal Primacy in the Council of Florence, and owing to

the arguments of Bishop John Fisher, he became entirely convinced that with the Papacy lay the hope of the world. After he had been examined by Archbishop Cranmer, Archbishop Cranmer did what he could to save Blessed Thomas More from condemnation. He implored the King through Cromwell to re-write the oath which was the only difficulty that More made. More was quite willing to swear allegiance to Anne Boleyn, but he would not deny the rights of the Papacy contained in the pre-amble to the Oath. That is to say, his whole quarrel was simply as to the power of the Papacy. He was willing to accept Anne Boleyn, willing to accept whatever might be said by the King. He had no quarrel over the things done. But if he be asked to swear an oath he could not do it with the preamble which stated the full purpose of the oath. More knew perfectly well that his real opponent was the King personally, and that this was because the King knew Thomas More to be the sole adversary he had to fear. When he had finished with More he had finished with the opposition. There was no one with the same character, the same following to stand up against him. Even the bishops were a scattered and broken body when More had been got out of the way.

For himself, More saw sanely what all the trouble was about. He objected to those who attacked the Renaissance, to those who attacked the study of Greek. He wrote vigorously to Oxford against a preacher who had denounced the study of the classics, saying: "Will it be pretended that what he condemns is not literature, but the immoderate study of it—surely that sin is not so common as to need a public sermon." He was entirely of the Renaissance in his habits, in his circle, in his desires, retaining the piety of that cultural group that had existed in England, devoted to his prayers. His own sayings on prayer are as exquisite as anything of

the mystics. Yet he is found insisting on the value of the Catholic faith precisely because of the Papacy. To him the Reformer was impatient, and it was impatience that was what was wrong with Reform. It could not succeed. It was trying a short cut. One day it would wake up and discover how wrong it was. To him the Papacy was the whole thing. For that reason he was quite willing to go to his death.

The word "merry" is the word that comes most often of any adjective in all his works, in his sayings, in his letters; and just as merrily as he had lived, so merrily he would die. I think his greatness came from the moment really that he went to prison. It was under that hard test that the heroic side of his character showed its full splendour, illumined Europe with its great blaze. Is it wonderful, is it fantastic to recall that what seems almost alone to have survived of his, is an old mulberry tree, the material out of which worms manufacture their exquisite silk?

We think of his body "formed with such perfect symmetry as to leave nothing to be desired" over a year in the Tower, entering it with that eager walk of his. Do you know the picture of him (it must be here somewhere on these walls) as a young man, in the Uffizzi gallery in Florence, eager, with his sharp face? You think of him going into the Tower in the fulness of his manhood, entering in erect, and then, as they describe him, coming out bowed and broken. Only the body was broken, the spirit was indomitable still. Where he lies no man knows for sure. Aubrey, in his "Lives," tells us, as you know, that he lies actually here in Chelsea, in the church of Saint Luke behind that black marble tomb that he put up for himself, writing on it his own epitaph. Cresacre More says he was buried in the chapel of Saint Peter ad Vincula in the Tower, "either in the belfry or, as some say, as one entereth into the vestry." Though

his tomb be uncertain, he has left a great name. The King succeeded in what he wanted to do. He broke the opposition. He made England eventually the England that we know. More was his sole opposition really, he and Fisher—the two men in England of whom the King was afraid. These were leaders because of their character, delightful from their human side, perfect, as we think, from the point of view of the divine. At the moment Henry won. Yet we do not think that, with the death of More, More's influence was done. We think, on the contrary, many of us who are here, that what he stood for, what he wrote in defence of, that against which he would not say a word and for which he died was, as he held it, to be the only hope of Christendom.

APPENDIX I

CATALOGUE

OF

RELICS, PORTRAITS, PRINTS, BOOKS, DOCUMENTS,

and other

MEMORIALS of SIR THOMAS MORE

as shown at the Exhibition held at
the Beaufort Street Shrine, Chelsea
9th - 13th July, 1929

The Exhibition attracted a great deal of attention from the Public and the Press. The following are typical comments upon it:

THE TIMES—"Thomas More, to those who read him or about him, seems strangely like a living personal friend; and the Exhibition on part of the site of his house at Chelsea has more than an intellectual interest."

MANCHESTER GUARDIAN.—"One of the most fascinating displays of the relics of a great man that has been made in London for years past."

DAILY TELEGRAPH.—"To those learned in the life and times of one of the most beautiful figures in English history, the Exhibition will be a delight; to the general visitor it will revisualise More and bring us back to the days of Henry VIII. . . In the Exhibition we are in the presence of two spirits, one essentially a ruler of men, the other a servant of God."

SECTION A.

RELICS

1. HAIR-SHIRT worn by More and bequeathed by him to Margaret Roper on the day of his Execution.

   From her it passed to Margaret Clement (More's adopted daughter), whose daughter founded the Community of St. Monica's, Louvain, from which that of Newton Abbot was founded.

   Lent by the Canonesses of Newton Abbot.

2. THE STONYHURST RELICS, bequeathed by Father Thomas More (†1773), Provincial of the Jesuits, and last male descendant of More—

   (a). A solid Gold George, presented to More by Henry VIII.
   (b). The seal of More as Sub-Treasurer of England.
   (c). Two gold Crucifixes, one with pearls.
   (d). A crystal and silver Reliquary which contained one of the martyr's teeth and a piece of bone.
   (e). A Cameo with head of Our Lady.
   (f). A Pounce-box of cowrie shell.

3. A SMALL PORTION OF TEH HAIR-SHIRT in Reliquary.
   Lent by Rt. Rev. Bishop Bidwell, St. Mary's, Cadogan Street.

4. ANOTHER PORTION of same.
   Lent by Dominican Convent, Stone.

5. PORTION OF MORE'S CAP of black silk.
   Lent by Bar Convent, York.

6. ROSARY RING.

   This relic was bequeathed by Mother Mary More (sister of Father Thomas More, S.J), to the English Convent at Bruges, and has been handed down in the Trappes family.

   Lent by New Hall Convent, Chelmsford.

7. WHITE LINEN RUFF, handed down in the Salvin family, Sutton Place.

Lent by the Duke of Sutherland.

8. DRINKING CUP, oak, with bands of silver.

Lent by More-Eyston, Esq.

9. BOOK OF HOURS. Early black-letter with wood-cuts. Contains prayers and pious reflections in More's handwriting, having been in use during his imprisonment.

It came to the Denbigh family through that of Powys of Berwick, in Shropshire.

Lent by the Earl of Denbigh.

10. IMPRESSION OF SEAL of MORE as Sub-Treasurer (see No. 2b).

Lent by Bar Convent, York.

11. DRAWINGS OF TWO PORTIONS OF VERTEBRA, one preserved by the English Canonesses at Bruges; the other at the Jesuit Noviceship, Roehampton. Bequeathed to Bruges by Father Henry More, S.J.

Lent by L. W. Longstaff, Esq.

12. SUPPOSED AUTOGRAPH MS. of More's *History of King Richard III.*

This is described in the official catalogue of the College of Arms as an autograph, but it may possibly be written by an amanuensis.

Lent by the Chapter of the College.

SECTION B.

PORTRAITS

13 & 14. GRACIOUSLY LENT BY HIS MAJESTY THE KING FROM THE COLLECTION IN THE LIBRARY AT WINDSOR CASTLE.

Holbein's Original SKETCHES of Sir Thomas More and Margaret Roper, made for the oil-painting of the family group of which the original is lost.

Lent by Major CHICHESTER-CONSTABLE.

15. PORTRAIT in oils of More, by Holbein.

16. PORTRAIT in oils of Erasmus, by Holbein.

These two pictures are believed to have descended to Burton Constable in the family of Tunstalls from Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of Durham, the intimate of More and Erasmus, and More's greatest friend, having been brought from Wycliffe, for long the seat of the Tunstall family, to Burton Constable.

Lent by the DUCHESS OF NORFOLK.

17. PORTRAIT in oils of More, attributed doubtfully to Holbein.

Lent by Rt. Hon. JOHN BURNS.

18. PORTRAIT in oils of More, by Hans Eworth, a pupil of Holbein.

Lent by CHARLES ROBERTSON, Esq.

19. MINIATURE PORTRAIT of More, by Bone, after Holbein.

Lent by LADY CATHERINE ASHBURNHAM.

20. OIL PAINTING inscribed as of More, but at least doubtful.

Lent by Rt. Hon. JOHN BURNS.

21. COPY in water-colours of Holbein's original in possession of W. J. Lenthall, Esq. (Drawn by Lewis).

Lent by the JESUIT FATHERS.

22. MINIATURE PORTRAIT (date uncertain).

Lent by the CARMELITE CONVENT, Darlington.

23. Copper-plate ENGRAVING on vellum.

Inscription: *Thomas Morus Quondam Angliæ Cancellamus (sic) sui Sæculi Delicium et Eruditionis Decus*, and below:

Ingemuit latium magno Cicerone perempto.
Anglia sic gemuit te moriente moro.

Once belonged to Mother Margaret Mostyn.

Lent by THE PRESIDENT OF ST. EDMUND'S COLLEGE, WARE.

24. FOUR REPRODUCTIONS (Medici) of Holbein's portraits of the More family.

SECTION C.

The following are lent by L. W. LONGSTAFF, Esq., *a descendant of Sir Thomas More, and are taken from a much larger collection consisting of* 600 *prints.*

25. 48 PORTRAITS of Blessed Thomas More, including photographs of pictures by Holbein. From a selection of 118 pictures.

26. Fictitious PORTRAITS of same, including photographs of two pictures by Holbein.

27. FOUR REPRODUCTIONS of More's family group, by Holbein, including a photograph of the original sketch by Holbein for the painting which is lost.

28. TEN PORTRAITS, by Bartolozzi and others, of Sir Thomas More's family and friends, and of Richard Rich, who caused his condemnation, and of Anne Boleyn.

29. Selected PRINTS and PHOTOGRAPHS illustrating More's entire career.

30. ELECTROTYPE COPY of an unique bronze medal in the British Museum, 17th century.

31. ELECTROTYPE COPY of a very scarce bronze medal in the British Museum, late 16th or early 17th century.

32. ALUMINIUM MEDAL (modern).

33. PLASTER MEDALLION with portrait of More (modern).

34. "ANGEL," a gold coin of the time of Henry VIII. Sir Thomas More sent such a coin to the headman on the morning of his execution.

35. WATER-COLOUR DRAWING of Chelsea Old Church, 1850.

SECTION D.

The following are lent by the RT. HON. JOHN BURNS. *—and have never before been exhibited.*

36. GENERAL PARDON and PASSPORT to Louvain granted to Cresacre More, Feb. 1st, 1628, with the great seal of James I (second seal) attached.

Christopher Cresacre More was great-grandson and biographer of Sir Thomas More. He had been a Seminarist at Douay, but was never ordained priest.

37. Manuscript of Harpsfield's LIFE OF MORE.

38. Early copy of William Roper's LIFE OF SIR THOMAS MORE, of which 10 other MS. copies are known to exist.

39. ANOTHER COPY, which was used by Hearne for his Latin *Life of More*, 1716.

40. MS. LIFE OF SIR THOMAS MORE, signed Ro. Ba., 1599. It is dedicated to R.R., thought to be "Red Rose," that is Arabella Stuart, pretender to the throne.

41. MS. copy of early but uncertain date of the TREATISE TO RECEIVE YE BLESSED BODY OF OUR LORDE SACRAMENTALLY AND VIRTUALLY.

42. DOCUMENT with signature of Sir John Baldwin, one of the judges at More's last trial.

43. VOLUME containing signature of Sir Thomas Pope, who brought the news to More of his impending Execution.

SPECIAL GROUP OF BOOKS

44. DIALOGUE OF COMFORT AGAINST TRIBULATION. 1st English edition, 1573. Written by More in the Tower chiefly for his family, and smuggled out by Margaret Roper.

45. A DEVOUT TREATISE ABOUT THE PATER NOSTER by Erasmus.—Translated by Margaret Roper, 1530.

46. EXPOSITIO FIDELIS DE MORTE D. THOMÆ MORI. Antwerp, 1535. (1st edition was published in Paris).

47. THEATRUM CRUDELITATUM [by Verstegan,] giving an account and picture of More's execution. Antwerp, 1604. (See also No. 83).

48. LETTER OF SYR THO. MORE KNYGHT AGAINST FRYTH, 1533. It was in defence of Eucharistic doctrine.

49. SIR THOMAS MORE'S HOUSE AT CHELSEA, a play by Ruth Bray (with picture of Margaret Roper). 1926.

EARLY EDITIONS OF MORE'S WORKS

The UTOPIA.

50. 1st Edition (Latin). Louvain, 1516.
51. 2nd Edition (Latin). Paris, 1517.
52. 3rd Edition (Latin. Basle, Mar. 1518.
53. 4th Edition (Latin). Basle, Nov. 1518.
54. 1st Edition (English). London, 1551.
55. 2nd Edition (English). London, 1556.
56. 3rd Edition (English). London, 1597.
57. 4th Edition (English). London, 1624.
58. Reprint of same, with Roper's Life, etc. London, 1903.
59. THE SUPPLICACYON OF SOULYS. 1st Edition. 1527.
60. A DIALOGUE OF SYR THOMAS MORE KNYGHTE. 1st Edition. 1530.
61. THE CONFUTACYON OF TYNDALE'S ANSWERE. 1st Edition. London, 1532.

LIVES OF SIR THOMAS MORE

67. Ellis Heywood: IL MORO. Florence, 1556.
68. LIFE AND DEATH OF SIR THOMAS MORE. By Cresacre More. Paris, 1631.
69. Thomas Stapleton: TRES THOMÆ. Douay, 1588.

70. THOMÆ MORI VITA ET EXITUS. London, 1652.

71. Mackintosh: LIFE OF SIR THOMAS MORE. London, 1844.

MISCELLANEOUS

72. Erasmus: THE PRAISE OF FOLIE: MORIÆ ENCOMIUM. (Translation by Sir Thomas Challoner). 1549.

73. Henry VIII: ASSERTIO SEPTEM SACRAMENTORUM ADVERSUS M. LUTHERUM. 1st Edition. London, 1521.

The Title-page bears the signature of Thomas Paynell, Chaplain to Henry VIII, who helped to compile the book possibly with assistance of More, who was his great friend.

74. ANTWORTT DEUTSCH: Martin Luther's reply to above work. Original Edition. 1522.

SECTION E.

The following are lent by the JESUIT FATHERS, London.

75. THE WORKES OF SIR THOMAS MORE, KNYGHT, some time Lord Chancellor of England.

This collection of the English works only was prepared by his nephew, Rastell. 1st Edition. London, 1557.

76. THOMÆ MORI ANGLI . . . OMNIA . . . LATINA OPERA.

A rare Edition of the collected Latin works.

This copy belonged to Professor Brewer and has marginal notes by his hand. The 1st Edition was at Basle, 1563.

Antwerp, 1566.

77. THOMAE MORI OPERA OMNIA.

Contains a fine portrait of More. Frankfort, 1689.

78. Thomas Stapleton, D.D., TRES THOMÆ, [SEU DE S. THOMÆ APOSTOLI REBUS GESTIS DE S. THOMA ARCHIEPISCOPO CANTUARIENSI ET MARTYRE. D. THOMÆ MORI ANGLIÆ QUONDAM CANCELARII VITA.] Douay, 1588.

The three Thomases are St. Thomas the Apostle, St. Thomas of Canterbury, and Blessed Thomas More.

79. UTOPIA. English Translation. London, 1684.

80. HISTORY OF KING RICHARD III. By Sir Thomas More. London, 1821.

81. LIFE OF SIR THOMAS MORE, Kt. By his great-grandson, Thomas More, Esq. London, 1726.

82. LIFE AND DOCTRINE OF OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. By H.M., of the Society of Jesus.

Ghent, 1656.

This is Henry More, great-grandson of Sir Thomas, who became Vice-Provincial of the Jesuits. The book was published 7 years earlier in Latin.

83. THEARUM CRUDELITATUM HÆRETICORUM NOSTRI TEMPORIS. By Richard Verstegan. Antwerp, 1592.

Deals with the martyrdom of BB. More and Fisher and many others.

84. Nicolai Sanderi: DE ORIGINE ET PROGRESSU SCHISMATIS ANGLICANI LIBRI TRES.

A much discussed and controverted work by a Fellow of New College, Oxford. Inglostatt, 1587.

Ingolstatt, 1587.

85. B. Edmund Campion: DECEM RATIONES and OPUSCULA.

The Latin treatise on the Divorce of Henry VIII contains a description of More's martyrdom.

86. ECCLESIÆ ANGLICANÆ TROPHÆA. Sive Sanctorum Martyrum qui pro Christo Catholiquæque Fidei Veritate asserenda, antiquo recentiorique Persecutionum tempore, mortem in Anglia subierunt Passiones. (*The Trophies of the English Church.* Or, The sufferings of the Holy Martyrs, who, in ancient and more modern times of persecution, have suffered death in England for Christ and for maintaining the Truth of the Catholic Faith).

Printed in Rome in the English College by Nicholas Circiniani, and now engraved by John Baptist Cavalieri. With the privilege of Pope Gregory XIII, A.D. 1584. *It was this book which led to the Beatification of Sir Thomas More and* 62 *other martyrs by Pope Leo XIII, in* 1886.

87. ORIGINAL DECREE OF LEO XIII declaring the above-mentioned Beatification. Dec. 29th, 1886.

88. OFFICIAL PAPERS for the Process of Beatification of BB. Fisher and More and other English Martyrs. Rome, 1886.

SECTION F.

The following are lent by CHELSEA PUBLIC LIBRARY.

89. SEATED STATUETTE of More, in bronze, with pedestal.

This beautiful work of art was presented to the Borough of Chelsea by public subscription of the inhabitants.

90. COPY of Holbein's sketch of More.

91. MODERN PLAQUE representing More and Erasmus.

92. ENGRAVING by Kip of Beaufort House, made about 1699.

The view represents More's house in Chelsea, but incorporates the alterations made by Cecil in 1597 and any later ones made by Cranfield or others in the 17th century. It seems probable that the Hatfield plans of Cecil's rebuilding of the house were not carried out, and that Cecil's actual alterations did not greatly alter the external appearance of More's house as indicated in Thorpe's view (1623) in the Sloane Museum Collection. Dr. King, Rector of Chelsea, 1694-1732, says that Cecil "new-built or at least new-fronted" the house in 1597.

93. THE MARTYR'S HEAD. Reproduced from the *Gentleman's Magazine of* 1835. This precious relic is still preserved in the crypt under the Roper Chapel in St. Dunstan's Church, Canterbury.

94. THE UTOPIA. First illustrated Edition. 1517.

95. DIALOGUE OF COMFORT. 1st Edition. London, 1553.

96. Play entitled SIR THOMAS MORE, with facsimile pages of part of B. S. Harl. MS. 7368.

It is known that the play itself is by Anthony Munday, but some authorities maintain that the said pages are in William Shakespeare's handwriting.

SECTION G.

SEPARATE LOANS.—MISCELLANEOUS.

97. A DIALOGUE OF COMFORT AGAINST TRIBULACION. Antwerp, 1573.

Written by More primarily for the use of his own family. Copy in the original binding, from the library at Croxteth, the seat of the Molyneux family.

Lent by the Lord Camoys.

98. Maurice Chauncey. O. Carth.: HISTORIA ALIQUOT SÆCULI NOSTRI MARTYRUM IN ANGLIA CUM PIA TUM LECTU JUCUNDA. . . Mayence, 1550.

Chauncey was Prior of the Charterhouse at Bruges and the last survivor of the London Carthusians. In 1535, John Houghton, the Prior of the latter, was among the first executed for refusing to acknowledge the ecclesiastical supremacy of the king, and his death was followed by the martyrdom of Fisher and More.

Lent by Rev. President,
St. Edmund's College, Ware.

99. AUTOGRAPH MS. OF CRESACRE MORE (great-grandson and biographer of Sir Thomas), consisting of notes by Dr. Arrowsmith.

Lent by the same.

100. Blessed Thomas More: THE ANSWERE TO THE FIRST PART OF THE POISONED BOOK WHICH A NAMELESS HERETIKE HATH NAMED THE SOUPER OF THE LORD. London, Wyllyam Rastell, 1532.

The first part contains "The Confutacyon of Tyndale's Answere."

Lent by the Abbot of Ampleforth.

101. PLAQUE carved in wood.—A portrait, 1785.
Lent by the Rev. J. A. Wissink Longridge, Preston.

102. PHOTOGRAPH OF PICTURE OF MORE'S FAMILY (copy of Holbein's), in possession of E. J. Horniman, Esq.
Lent by Reginald Blunt, Esq.

103. MEZZOTINT COPY of same original picture by Merkel.
Lent by Mrs. St. George Gray.

104. PROOF COPY of Engraving of the Basle Sketch made by Holbein for above picture.

Lent by Rt. Hon. John Burns.

104a. A later ENGRAVING of same picture.

Lent by Public Library, Chelsea.

105. Anthony Munday: SIR THOMAS MORE, a Play. With facsimile of 3 leaves of British Museum MS. Edited by Sir Maunde Thompson. 1916.

Lent by Jesuit Fathers.

SECTION H.

Documents relating to Crosby Hall, Bishopsgate (now Chelsea), to be viewed in the Hall.

The following are lent by W. GOSS, Esq., *Librarian of the Bishopsgate Institute.*

106. HISTORY OF CROSBY HALL.
The copy is copiously interleaved with prints.

107. COLLECTION OF PRINTS illustrating Crosby Hall.

108. TWO VOLUMES OF SCRAP-BOOK, with prints etc., relating to the same.

109. LEASE OF THE HALL by Bonvisi, More's successor.

The following lent by MORE-EYSTON, Esq.

110. EARLIER LEASE OF CROSBY HALL, with More's own signature.

SECTION K.

Volumes presented by MAJOR CROSSTHWAITE-EYRE *to be sold for benefit of Exhibition Fund and Shrine.*

111. SIX COPIES of facsimile in black-letter of More's CONFUTACYON OF TYNDALE'S ANSWERE, Edited by W. E. Campbell, and produced by Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswood. Price, 30s.

112. SIX COPIES of text alone of above publication. Price, 5s.

APPENDIX II

A SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS RELATING TO THE MARTYR

The following books of, or about, Sir Thomas More can easily be got and each is of interest in its own particular way:

1. Father Bridgett, (C.SS.R.), *Life of Sir Thomas More.* Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 7/6.

2. *The Last Letters of Sir Thomas More.* Ed. W. E. Campbell, Manresa Press, 3/6.

3. More's *Utopia* and his *Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation*, with an Introductory Essay by Judge O'Hagan, Everyman Library, Dent, 2/6.

4. Roper's *Life of More* together with More's *Utopia* and *The Life of Richard III*, Walter Scott, 2/-.

5. Thomas Stapleton's *Life of Sir Thomas More*, Translated by Mgr. Hallett, Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 6/-.

6. *The Story of Blessed Thomas More.* By a nun of Tyburn. (St. Nicholas Series) 2/-.

We should like also to draw attention to the beautiful reproductions of the Black-Letter editions of some of More's works by the King's Printers, Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode, copies of which were presented for sale at the Exhibition, and noted above in the Catalogue.

They are :

1. *The Dialogue of Sir Thomas More Concerning Tyndale*, Ed. W. E. Campbell. 35/-. The black-letter text by itself may be had for 5/-.

2. *The Earlier English Works of Sir Thomas More*. Ed. W. E. Campbell, 40/-. (Jan. 1, 1930.)

3. *More's Utopia and its Social Theories*. By W. E. Campbell. (Feb. 1, 1930.)

The Stanhope Press, Ltd., Rochester

270.05
M 813-5

18516

KNOX, RONALD ET AL.

AUTHOR

The Fame of Blessed Thomas More

TITLE

DATE LOANED	BORROWER'S NAME	ROOM NUMBER
	Heerin	
	DEC 5 1986	

18516

Cosmopolitan
Science & Art Service Co., Inc.
638 Lexington Avenue
New York, N. Y.